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José Reyes Del Real Viramontes
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**The Dissertation Committee for José Reyes Del Real Viramontes
Certifies that this is the approved version of the following Dissertation:**

**Exploring the Cultural Production of the Transfer Receptive Culture by
Latina/o/x Community College Transfer Students at a Predominantly
White Institution in Texas**

Committee:

Luis Urrieta, Jr., Supervisor

Noah De Lissovoy

Claudia Cervantes-Soon

Victor Sáenz

Dimpal Jain

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Dedication

Este logro se lo dedico a mi familia: a mi mamá Martha y mi papa José, mi hermana Paola, hermano Moises, y sobrino Jason. Gracias por todo su amor y apoyo siempre. I will also like to dedicate this to my partner Celina, thank you for all of your unconditional love, support, and patience through this journey. Finally, I would also like to dedicate this to the Sahagun and the Lopez families, thank you for all of your love and support throughout the years.

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Abstract

Exploring the Cultural Production of the Transfer Receptive Culture by Latina/o/x Community College Transfer Students at a Predominantly White Institution in Texas

José Reyes Del Real Viramontes, PhD.

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Supervisor: Luis Urrieta, Jr.

In Texas, 42% of Latina/o/x undergraduate students enroll in community colleges. Unfortunately, only 20% of Latina/o/x students who begin their post-secondary education at a Texas community college, transfer to a four-year college or university after six-years (Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2016). These numbers describe an urgent need for higher education scholars, researchers, practitioners, and policy makers to examine the transfer conditions for Latina/o/x community college students in Texas. Using a case study methodology at Transfer Student University, including semi-structures interviews and photo elicitation, this study explored how Latina/o/x community college transfer students exerted their community cultural wealth (CCW) (Yosso, 2005) to navigate and engage in the cultural production (Levinson & Holland, 1996) of the transfer receptive culture (TRC) (Jain, Herrera, Bernal, & Solórzano, 2011), at a Predominantly White Institution (PWI) in Texas. For this study, a total of eighteen participants were interviewed, including ten Latina/o/x students and four administrators, two faculty, and two academic advisors. A Transfer receptive culture refers to how a four-year institution engages prospective community college transfer students in navigating and negotiating the

community college, in part by ensuring that students take the appropriate coursework, apply, enroll, and successfully earn a baccalaureate degree (Jain et al., 2011). Findings from this study revealed that even though Transfer Student University has transfer policies and practices set in place to support community college transfer students, these policies and practices are not culturally responsive to meet the specific needs of Latina/o/x transfer students. This study uniquely contributes to the field of higher education in at least three ways: First, it explores the transfer receptive culture for Latina/o/x community college transfer students at a PWI. Secondly, it considers the spatial transfer receptive culture for Latina/o/x community college transfer students at a PWI. Finally, it investigates how Latina/o/x community college transfer students apply their CCW to culturally produce the TRC at a PWI.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Research Context

Community colleges are today the largest post-secondary education segment in the United States, enrolling 47% of the undergraduate student population (Hendel and Williams, 2012). Over 60% of Latino students in postsecondary education begin their college careers in the community college, but less than 1% transfer to a four-year college or university (Yosso & Solorzano, 2006). In Texas 53% of students choose the community college as their entry point into higher education (Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2013). Additionally, 25% of students who start at community college eventually transfer to a four-year institution within six-years (Texas Public Higher Education Almanac 2014). Furthermore, 63% of Latina/o students in Texas choose community college as an entry point into higher education; this number is higher than the national average. Unfortunately, the majority of FTEC Latina/o community college students withdraw without obtaining a degree (THECB, 2008a).

Texas statewide bachelor degree graduation rates for community and technical college cohort of first time entering undergraduates (FTEU) is outdated, the most recent report provided by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board is for the Fall 2004. This report shows that of all community and technical college students entering as undergraduates in the Fall of 2004, only 13.4% graduated in 6 years <http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/reports/DocFetch.cfm?DocID=2300>).

According to Rivas, Pérez, Álvarez, & Solórzano's (2007) study of entering Latina/o students who transferred from the California Community College system to

California State University or University of California systems showed that 40% aspired to transfer to a senior institution and earn a bachelor's degree. Despite Latina/o community college students having high educational aspirations, the reality is that Latina/o students are not transferring and or completing a bachelor's degree in proportion to the numbers entering the community college, with the intent to transfer. There are multiple factors that contribute to this phenomena and include both academic and non-academic challenges. For example, one academic challenge that Latina/o community college students experience, is being overrepresented in developmental English courses limiting their opportunities to enroll in transferable English courses (Suarez, 2003). Additionally, Latina/o community college students experience social challenges that contribute to them delaying or preventing them from transferring. One of the major non-academic challenges Latina/o community college students face, is having limited or inadequate information to be able to transfer including the support from their institution (Ornelas & Solorzano, 2004).

This study builds on Del Real Viramontes's (2014) which evaluated the institutional culture necessary to transfer to a selective university such as Transfer Student University. Based on the experiences of seven community college transfer students, findings from this study suggested that the university improved the outreach, orientation /transition programs, academic/social support services, as well as support the creation of a transfer student community on campus.

This study is guided by four overarching questions, two related to student experiences and two related to the experiences of administrators, faculty, and staff who work with or on behalf of community college transfer students.

Research Questions Students:

- 1) What is the perceived transfer receptive culture¹ by Latina/o/x community college transfer students at Transfer Student University?
- 2) How do Latina/o/x Community College Transfer students navigate and engage in the cultural production of the transfer receptive culture at Transfer Student University?

Research Questions Administrators, Faculty, Staff:

- 3) What is the perceived transfer receptive culture² for Latina/o community college transfer students by administrators, faculty, and staff who work with and on behalf of community college transfer students at Transfer Student University?
- 4) How do administrators, faculty, and staff engage in the cultural production of the transfer receptive culture for Latina/o/x community college students, at Transfer Student University?

TSU is amongst the top 20 public universities in the nation

(<http://colleges.usnews.rankingsandreviews.com/best-colleges/rankings/national->

¹ The institutional commitment by a four-year college or university to provide the support needed for students to transfer successfully—that is, to navigate the community college, take the appropriate coursework, apply, enroll, and successfully earn a baccalaureate degree in a timely manner (Jain, Herrera, Bernal, Solórzano, 2011, p. 252).

² The institutional commitment by a four-year college or university to provide the support needed for students to transfer successfully—that is, to navigate the community college, take the appropriate coursework, apply, enroll, and successfully earn a baccalaureate degree in a timely manner (Jain, Herrera, Bernal, Solórzano, 2011, p. 252).

[universities/](#)) and is one of the leading destinations for transfer students. TSU ranks amongst the top 30th nationally and top 10th in the state (<http://colleges.usnews.rankingsandreviews.com/best-colleges/rankings/most-transfers>).

One of the constraints of this ranking is that it does not show the number of community college transfer students versus those students who transfer from other four-year universities and/or bachelor degree completion rates.

To provide a sense of how Latina/o/x community college transfer students at TSU, navigated and engaged in the cultural production (Levinson and Holland, 1996) of the current transfer receptive culture (Jain, Herrera, Bernal, and Solórzano, 2011) at TSU, I interviewed academic advisors, faculty, and administrators who work with and on behalf of the transfer student community at TSU. When I interviewed the staff, faculty, and administrators for this study one of the first questions that I asked was, what do you perceive is the best service offered to Latina/o/x community college transfer students at TSU? The following describes their responses.

Several of the administrators shared some of the historical context to understanding of the current transfer receptive culture for Latina/o/x community college transfer students at TSU. For example, Mike, Associate Director of Admissions at TSU, who is currently in his 40th year serving this institution shared the following;

We've changed our approach in terms of the services that we provide, it happened because there's some institutional reasons and there's some legal reasons, that we had to change some of the processes and procedures and things that we used to do. When I first took over the transfer area, roughly 1993-94, we had a program that we called, the "Junior Community College Program." The Junior Community College Program, was a combination of outreach, scholarship, and recruitment program, targeted primarily at Black and Latino students. In terms with the overt

targeted approach to recruitment and to offering incentives to get those students to enroll at TSU. We lost the ability to have some of the components of that program, back when we were first entered the lawsuit for Hopwood, which was the diversity lawsuit. Then, since that time, we discontinued the components of those programs that were very targeted because at that time, both the institutional rules and the attorney general of the state of Texas, said that, you know we could not be that targeted in terms of scholarships as well as recruitment, and at that point for admissions as well. So, it had to be all, it could not be as targeted along racial lines or along ethnic lines. And so at that point, we reconstructed the program to where it was, that it was not targeted so much by racial/ethnic groups, but it was more the services that we were providing for them, we were going to provide for everyone. So, we just broaden the umbrella to where everybody got the similar types of services. Somewhat today that is the approach that we still took (Mike, University Personnel).

From Mike's comment and the experiences of the Latina/o/x transfer students who participated in this study, the current approach that TSU has towards outreaching to minority community college students across the state of Texas is justified. Most of the participants in this study did not experienced any direct outreach by anyone from TSU. As a result, students had limited information about transferring to TSU. One of the things that does not coincide with Mike's comment in regards to when he said, "so we just broaden the umbrella to where everybody got the similar types of services" (Mike, TSU Personnel). Since 1998, the admissions practices at TSU, have been influenced by H.B.588, also known as the top 10% law, guarantees admission to all Texas seniors who graduate in the top ten percent of their class. (Niu, Tienda, & Cortes, 2006). In the spring of 2009, the 81st legislation session made changes to the automatic admission law at Transfer Student University. Under the new law (SB 175), students applying for admissions beginning with the summer 2011 and forward would be impacted. Currently

to be offered automatic admissions for the summer/fall 2018 and Spring 2019, students must be in the top 7% of their class (See Footnote³).

This law would ideally bring more ethnic/racial diversity (Tienda, Leicht, Sullivan, Maltese, & Lloyd, 2003; University of Texas Office of Public Affairs [UTOPA], 2003; Walker & Lavergne, 2001, as cited in Tienda & Niu, 2006), greater geographic diversity of incoming students (Montejano, 2001, as cited in Tienda & Niu, 2006), stronger institutional ties between secondary schools and the public flagship universities through expanding outreach efforts (Goodman, 2003, as cited in Tienda & Niu, 2006), and additional evidence that class rank is a more reliable predictor of college success than are standardized test scores (Faulkner, 2000, 2002; Glater, 2004; Rooney, 1998; Walker & Lavergne, 2001, as cited in Tienda & Niu, 2006). However, research also suggests that Black and Latino students who graduate from poor-resourced high schools, are less likely to choose selective institutions as their first choice, increasing their enrollment to less selective institutions, including community colleges (Niu, Tienda, and Cortes, 2006). Evidence from this study, does not coincide with Mike's comment regarding the expansion of services, in which everyone is served the same way. If anything, this top 10% law, is pushing minority students into enrolling at community colleges and no one is making sure that these students are being served.

Further, beginning with the Fall/Summer 2001 admissions, TSU set in place the

³ For the sake of anonymity of the institution, the study retracts this source. For a copy of this and others sources retracted in this study please contact the author.

Freshmen Transfer Program (FTP) (See Footnote⁴) FTP expands the admission options available to first-year applicants to TSU, by allowing them to begin their post-secondary education at another TSU system university. Once the student fulfills the FTP requirements as a freshman, he or she can transfer to TSU to complete their undergraduate degree (See Footnote⁵). In the 2010 Community College Transfer Report, published by The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, data show that the FTP set in place with other TSU System institutions currently takes 1/2 of the admission slots allocated for general transfer students (1,800 of 3,600 slots) (THECB, 2010). This means that potential qualified community college transfer students are automatically denied admissions to TSU in favor of FTP students. The policies and practices set in place through the FTP contributes to the structural impediments that prevent greater community college student transfer success (Hendel and Herrera, 2006), including that of the students from underserved groups such as, students from racial, ethnic, and low socioeconomic status (Zamani, 2001) who use the community college as their primary pathway into higher education.

Additionally, in 2014 TSU partnered with Transfer Community College (pseudonym) and launched a co-enrollment program for incoming first-year students. Freshmen Transfer Program through Co-Enrollment (FTPCE) was developed for students who are Texas residents and are eligible for automatic admission under the state's top 10

⁴ For the sake of anonymity of the institution, the study retracts this source. For a copy of this and others sources retracted in this study please contact the author.

⁵ For the sake of anonymity of the institution, the study retracts this source. For a copy of this and others sources retracted in this study please contact the author.

percent law, but who do not qualify under the new automatic admission policy for TSU (See Footnote⁶). Students who participate in FTPCE have two years to complete the core curriculum and maintain a 2.5 cumulative grade point average in order to continue with their bachelor's degree at TSU. Some of the benefits for students are that they have access to TSU advisors and resources but are not required to apply to transfer to TSU. One major challenge to this program is that not every student is eligible and or can apply to be part of FTPCE; TSU offers participation to a selected group of first-year applicants. The FTPCE, seems to be similar to FTP which I described earlier, the only difference is that Freshmen students begin their studies at a local community college that is part of the TCC system and can co-enroll at TSU until they fulfill at their academic requirements. In the long-run, programs like the FTPCE are taking resources away from students who traditionally attend the community college in order to transfer to a four-year university like TSU.

Trina. Associate Director with the Office of Financial Aid at TSU, shared that she was not familiar with current services specifically for Latina/o/x transfer students at TSU, but she shared that prior to the “Hopwood” case there was a scholarship specifically for minority transfer students. She shared,

Actually, that specifically no and one thing that when I first started here, this is back in the early 90's, so we had a specific scholarship that was for [...] It was called the, I think it was called the, “Minority Transfer Achievement Award,” the MTAA. And that one was specifically for transferring, for transfer students. Then when the decision came down, we were had been taken to court regarding our admissions policies and it was called. I am trying to remember the young lady's

⁶ For the sake of anonymity of the institution, the study retracts this source. For a copy of this and others sources retracted in this study please contact the author.

name, I think her name was, I know her last name was “Hopwood,” I want to say it was “Sherryl Hopwood,” “Hopwood,” so when that was looked at, they expanded from admissions you know, not being able to look at I guess solely look at ethnicity and race as part of being able to admit but they expanded that to financial aid also, and then those scholarships were discontinued (Trina, University Personnel).

Since the MTAA has been discontinued community college transfer students have relied on two scholarships offered at TSU, the “Terry Transfer Scholarship” and the “Floyd Agnew Scholarship,” neither of which is intended to serve minority transfer students. Even though these awards are available for all transfer students to apply, they have its limitations. For example, Trina shared that the Terry Transfer Scholarship is managed by the Terry Foundation, therefore all awards and their recipients are selected by the foundation and not by Trina’s office. As for the Floyd Agnew Scholarship, Trina’s office gets a limited amount of scholarships they can award each year, leaving the majority of transfer students depending on the financial aid they get awarded through FAFSA. In this study, the majority of students were awarded financial aid packages that included grants and loans, and only one student was awarded a transfer scholarship.

Citlali, Associate Director for New Student Services, at TSU, shared: In terms of Latinos/as specifically, I mean, I know for myself transfer orientations are a lot smaller than freshmen orientations. So, when I speak to the orientation advisors we really try to get them and encourage them to really just go out and talk to students and listen to students and hear what their story is or answers their questions. Like just be available, so that students can engage with current students. [...] If they’re an underrepresented student, they’ll talk about how they were kind of anxious about getting to UT and how its really big, or if they’re coming from what community college and how the OA always feels very like, like what is it, good about being there and hearing that student out, and being able to really help them connect the dots here (Citlali, University Personnel).

While I am sure that Citlali's student staff has the best intentions while they interact with transfer students of color, there is a limited amount of culturally responsive programming to meet the specific needs of Latina/o/x transfer students and their families. For example, Ismael shared that his parents came to orientation with him and attended sessions specifically for parents, but that TSU failed to acknowledge that there were first-generation parents with limited amount of understanding of what was going on. Ismael shared:

During orientation like my parents, were also present but at the same time, they felt really out of place, just cause they didn't know, they're also first-gen, they were basically me. They didn't know anything about college, they didn't know what they were doing. But so they have like a parent orientation as well, but they were in a room full of people with degrees and everything, and they were just signing up for different programs (Ismael, CCTS).

Ismael describes a reality that the U.S educational system generally assumes about all students and their families, that as long as they offer student orientation and extend the invitation to students' parents they have done their job. TSU should make it a priority to know who their admitted students are and know their family's as well. In addition, they should provide the necessary accommodations including but not limited to literature printed in Spanish, parent sessions in Spanish, Spanish/English interpreters, and a bilingual Spanish/English staff that can host the sessions for Spanish speaking parents.

Jay, Senior Academic Program Coordinator of the Transfer Year Experience Program, at TSU shared, "I would say the TSLC are the best service for these students, too (Jeff, TSU Personnel). Jay is referring to the Transfer Student Learning Communities, where transfer students are part of small learning community made up of other transfer

students and support staff, like a peer mentor who may also be a transfer student and an academic advisor. Students also get to take their academic classes together. However, there are a few limitations to how supportive and effective these learning communities can be for Latina/o/x students. For example, these learning communities are not culturally responsive to meet the needs of Latina/o/x students. Additionally, from students who participated in these learning communities I learned that they are not solely enrolled by community college transfer students. These learning communities are made up of community college transfer students and transfer students who have previously attended other four-year institutions. Since each group of students has had a different experience in transitioning to TSU, this may impact the focus of the learning community, including the social dynamics between the students. Finally, these learning communities are limited in who they serve, since not all transfer students are eligible to enroll.

Additionally, Jay shared more about how the current transfer student programming started. He shared;

So this program started when I came into the position. So, it started in June of 2015. It was a student driven initiative, so the student senate here, wrote a resolution that spoke to how transfer students didn't have the academic support that they need it. It called on the university to create an office dedicated to the academic support for transfer students. It specifically, mentioned things like, transfer year interest groups as the type of support they wanted. So that resolution bought them a meeting with then President. So our Dean and President met with student senate and the President gave money from their budget to permanently move over to undergraduate studies for this program (Jay, University Personnel).

One of the findings from my previous study (Del Real Viramontes, 2014) was that there was no transfer student programming in place at TSU. I am happy to know that what I started to see as conversations amongst students developed into what it is today.

Although there is still work to do, including making all transfer programming more culturally responsive to meet the specific needs of Latina/o/x and other racial/ethnic groups transfer student communities, what TSU offers not is a step in the right direction. Current transfer students can benefit from being part of transfer student orientation, the Transfer Student Learning Communities, spring signature courses only for transfer students, the Transfer Experience Center, and various transfer student organizations.

When I asked the faculty who teach the signature courses for transfer students they were not too familiar with the services provide to Latina/o/x transfer students. Lupita a Professor of Sociology shared, “because I am not an administrator I don’t know if I would be able to give you an answer. Hmmm but we have, one of the things we’ve done is to help them become more familiar with the institution you know (Lupita, University Personnel). Lupita’s response speaks to points, first, it shows how even though she may not know what services are offered to Latina/o/x transfer students, Lupita is willingly supporting her transfer students get acclimated with their new institution. This alone may have a positive impact on the academic success of Latina/o/x students. Second, it also shows the disconnect between TSU and or the Transfer Year Experience Program, to included their faculty in the loop regarding what is offered for transfer students at TSU. Ironically, Lupita teaches a signature course exclusively for transfer students in the spring, which are part of the Transfer Year Experience Program, and she has limited knowledge of what TSU has to offer her Latina/o/x students.

Finally, I asked two academic advisors Ericka and Craig to provide their perspective. Ericka. associate academic advisor, in the college of education, at TSU

That's a really good question. [...] I don't know that there is a space or a service, specifically for students who are both Latinx and transfer students here at TSU, at least not that I'm aware of. And if there is, I don't know if it's being promoted enough. So, I think any of the services that are probably the most [...] are probably more general that help them. Let me think, so I think the Transfer Student Learning Communities, are super important, and that one, is kind of a work in progress because, it grew out of First Year Learning Communities (Ericka, University Personnel).

Ericka's reflection confirms what almost everyone has said in terms of there not being a service offered to support and address the specific needs of Latina/o/x community college transfer students at TSU. One of the things that she mentioned that is important to bring up is that the Transfer Student Learning Communities were modeled after First Year Learning Communities, this may be a critical limitation seeing how transfer students and in particular Latina/o/x students, may have specific academic, social, and emotional needs, that a traditional curriculum cannot fully support.

From the reflections of the administrators, faculty, and staff, at TSU we can see that current outreach, recruitment, and scholarships benefiting Latina/o/x community college students were heavily impacted by the "Hopwood" legal case. Additionally, current transfer student programming was created and institutionalized because of the leadership and advocacy of former transfer students. In terms of the current transfer receptive culture (Jain, et al., 2011) for Latina/o/x community college transfer students at TSU, reflections from administrators, faculty, and staff, describe two major points; first, that the current transfer student programming and practices at TSU are not culturally responsive to meet the needs and goals of Latina/o/x students. Second, there seems to be

somewhat of a disconnect in terms of the services offered between offices and departments. We will look into these challenges throughout different points of the study.

Research Objective

To date there are few studies that have documented the experiences of Latina/o community college transfer students at a four-year institution (Castro & Cortez, 2016; Hagler, 2015; Rivas, 2012; Cobian, 2008; Rivera, 2007; and Valenzuela, 2006). The only existing study is by Castro and Cortez (2016) in addition to unpublished theses and dissertations. Furthermore, to date there is no study that looks at transfer receptive culture for Latina/o community college students. Jain, Herrera, Bernal, Solórzano (2011) define a transfer receptive culture as the:

institutional commitment by a four-year college or university to provide the support needed for students to transfer successfully—that is, to navigate the community college, take the appropriate coursework, apply, enroll, and successfully earn a baccalaureate degree in a timely manner (p. 252).

To contribute to the dearth of research in this area, this study will explore, document, and evaluate the transfer receptive culture (Jain et. al, 2011), in other words how the university is ensuring the transfer of Latina/o community college students, especially nontraditional, first-generation, and low-income. Additionally, this study will explore how the university provides outreach and resources that focus on the specific needs of Latina/o community college students while complimenting the community college mission of transfer, for incoming and current Latina/o community college transfer students at a public Texas university. I will specifically focus on 20 Latina/o transfer

student experiences both during the pre-transfer and post-transfer events and activities they go through as part of the transfer process.

To understand the transfer receptive culture (Jain, et. al, 2011) for Latina/o community college transfer students at TSU, I use two theoretical frameworks grounded in Critical Race Theory such as, the transfer receptive culture (Jain, et. al, 2011), the community cultural wealth model (Yosso, 2005), and a framework grounded in cultural studies; the cultural production (Levinson and Holland, 1996). Additionally, I use qualitative methodologies (semi-structure interviews and collection of photographs) that highlight how Latina/o community college transfer students experience the transfer receptive culture and more importantly, how they navigate and engage in the cultural production of the transfer receptive culture at TSU. Therefore, the objective of this study is two-fold. First, to identify key institutional practices that reveal the transfer receptive culture for Latina/o community college transfer students, at Transfer Student University. Second, this study also attempts to highlight how Latina/o community college transfer students navigate and engage the cultural production of the transfer receptive culture at TSU. Further, this study offers three unique contributions to the higher education literature. First, it offers the first examination of the transfer receptive culture at a public Texas university for Latina/o community college students. Second, it offers the inclusion and analysis of interviews with community college transfer students on their experiences with the receiving institution during the different stages of the transfer process including, at their community college (pre-transfer), transition and during their first semester as university students (post-transfer). Finally, and more importantly this study also

contributes to the higher education literature on how Latina/o community college transfer students navigate and engage in the “cultural production” of the transfer receptive culture at a public Texas university.

Research Questions

This study is guided by four overarching questions, two related to the student experiences and two relate to the experiences of administrators, faculty, and staff who work with or on behalf of community college transfer students.

Research Questions Students:

- 1) What is the perceived transfer receptive culture⁷ by Latina/o/x community college transfer students at Transfer Student University?
- 2) How do Latina/o/x Community College Transfer students navigate and engage in the cultural production of the transfer receptive culture at Transfer Student University?

Research Questions Administrators, Faculty, Staff:

- 3) What is the perceived transfer receptive culture⁸ for Latina/o community college transfer students by administrators, faculty, and staff who work with and on behalf of community college transfer students at Transfer Student University?

⁷ The institutional commitment by a four-year college or university to provide the support needed for students to transfer successfully—that is, to navigate the community college, take the appropriate coursework, apply, enroll, and successfully earn a baccalaureate degree in a timely manner (Jain, Herrera, Bernal, Solórzano, 2011, p. 252).

⁸ The institutional commitment by a four-year college or university to provide the support needed for students to transfer successfully—that is, to navigate the community college, take the appropriate coursework, apply, enroll, and successfully earn a baccalaureate degree in a timely manner (Jain, Herrera, Bernal, Solórzano, 2011, p. 252).

- 4) How do administrators, faculty, and staff engage in the cultural production of the transfer receptive culture for Latina/o/x community college students, at Transfer Student University?

These questions are critical to exploring the overall transfer receptive culture for Latina/o community college students at TSU, as one of the public universities in Texas because . By asking students to describe their interactions and their relationship with TSU during the pre-and post- transfer process, dealing with outreach and resources that address their specific needs as Latina/o community college students, will provide insights regarding the transfer receptive culture at TSU. This will shed light on TSU's level of commitment to provide the necessary support for Latina/o community college students to transfer successfully, by supporting them to navigate the community college, to take the appropriate coursework, apply, enroll, and successfully earn a baccalaureate degree in a timely manner (Dimpal et al., 2011). Moreover, in asking students to provide their narrative and a collection of artifacts on how TSU's institutional history, mission, physical settings, norms, traditions, values, practices, beliefs and assumptions is supportive of them as Latina/o community college transfer students, will provide valuable insights about campus culture for Latina/o community college transfer students at TSU. In answering these questions I anticipate the opportunity to contribute to the development of both transfer policies and programing that will ensure the personal, academic, and social success of Latina/o students and their communities in Texas.

Significance of the Study

Considering the disproportion between the number of Latina/o students who enter higher education through the community college versus those who eventually transfer and graduate from a four-year college or university is astonishing. These numbers describe an urgent need for higher education scholars, researchers, practitioners, and policy makers to look into the transfer function for community college students in the state of Texas and to look at this phenomenon from different perspectives. Historically the transfer function had been analyzed from the perspective of the community college (Bahr, Toth, Thirolf, and Massé, 2013). Therefore, it is imperative that we begin to evaluate this phenomenon from the perspective of the four-year institution. For this reason the significance of this study is relevant in at least two ways. It will be the first study that looks into the transfer receptive culture at a public Texas University such as Transfer Student University, through the experiences of Latina/o community college transfer students. Second, to my knowledge it will also be the first study to look at the campus culture at a four-year college and university to directly evaluate how the campus culture impacts the sense of belonging, retention, and graduation of Latina/o community college transfer students, at a public Texas university.

This dissertation will be presented in eight chapters. Chapter one is the introduction, while Chapter two reviews the literature and theoretical perspectives that I use to support my research. In chapter three I discuss the methods and the setting of where the study will take place. Chapter four discusses the findings of how students culturally produced the pre-application transfer receptive culture. Chapter five discusses the findings of how students culturally produced the post-admissions transfer receptive culture. Chapter six discusses the findings of how students culturally produced the post-enrollment transfer receptive culture. Chapter seven explores the spatial transfer receptive culture. Finally, chapter eight offers the overall conclusions, contributions, and directions for future research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review & Theoretical Frameworks

The purpose of this research study is to evaluate and document the transfer receptive culture for Latina/o community college transfer students at a TSU. In order to understand this phenomenon, the main objective within the review of the literature is two-fold. First, the review of the literature will synthesize studies that describe both the institutional and campus cultures. Second, the review of the literature will include literature that describes the lived experiences of Latina/o community college transfer students through the transfer process at a four-year college or university. Given the limited amount of literature on the transfer receptive culture for Latina/o community college transfer students at public Texas universities, the following discussion is organized in two parts. The first part draws on three major areas of research relevant to this study and provides the literature review. The first section presents a brief discussion regarding the role of the community college in higher education including, the emergence of the transfer function, the role of the community college and the four-year university within the transfer function, policies impacting the transfer function, and the transfer gap. The second section describes the literature on Latina/o community college transfer students' experiences at four-year universities. Finally, the third section describes models of affirming transfer culture involving two-year and four-year institutions. The second part of this chapter addresses the theoretical framework applied to the study of the TRC for Latina/o community college students in Texas.

The Role of the Community College in Higher Education

Today the community college enrolls almost half of the whole undergraduate student population (AACC, 2016). When community colleges began at the beginning of the 20th century, they focused almost entirely on transfer (Bragg, 2001). Today the community college serves a more comprehensive mission and serves six educational functions including 1) collegiate and transfer education; 2) vocational education; 3) developmental or compensatory education; 4) general education; 5) community education and service; and 6) economic and workforce development (Meter, 2013, as cited in Levin and Kater, 2013). Student diversity in community colleges increased since the passing of the Higher Education Act of 1965. One of the first reports to reveal enrollment data desegregated by race and ethnicity shows that African Americans, Latinas/os, Asian/Pacific Islanders, and Native Americans made up 19.6% of community college students enrolled nationally (NCES, 2010). Today California, Florida, and Texas, enroll the highest proportion of racial and ethnic minorities, with California enrolling 49.3%, Florida 42.6%, and Texas 53.3% (Santiago, Galdeano, and Taylor, 2015, p. 8). In these states, Latina/o students overwhelmingly make up half or more of the student population, with California enrolling 28.5%, Florida 28.1%, and Texas 34.5% (Santiago, Galdeano, and Taylor, 2015, p. 8).

As of Fall 2012 Latina/o students were the second largest group after Whites (54%) enrolled in community colleges with 20%, followed by African Americans with 15% and Asians with 6% (Santiago, Galdeano, and Taylor, 2015, p. 8). In addition, 46% of Latina/o undergraduate students were enrolled at a community college, with 62% of Latina/os enrolled in a two-year institution either in California or in Texas (Santiago,

Galdeano, and Taylor, 2015, p. 8). Academically over half of Latinas/os who enroll in a community college need to enroll in developmental education. In educational attainment Latinas/os earn more associate's degrees than bachelor degrees. The top three disciplines where Latinos earned their associates degree were liberal arts (38%) health professions (16%) and business (12%) (Santiago, Galdeano, and Taylor, 2015). As mentioned earlier, this study will focus on the transfer receptive culture for Latina/o community college students at a public Texas university, therefore the following section will provide context to the Latina/o K-16 educational conditions in Texas.

K-16 School Context

Understanding the school context in Texas is important as a starting point in addressing the community college transferability for Latina/o students. The schooling experiences for Latina/o students in Texas have a socio-historical and political context of discriminatory practices that have negatively impacted the Latina/o community (Valenzuela, 1999). Key factors such as school and residential segregation, racialized segmented labor incorporation, denied political access, and surveillance and containment by policing forces continue to have an enduring legacy that influences the current context of Latina/o lives in Texas. These conditions of inequality continue to deny equal educational opportunities to Latina/o students that often lead them into the community college system, rather than four-year universities. Valencia (2000) describes, for example, the widespread school failure of African American and Mexican American students in Texas public schools by citing long-standing systemic public school inequities including that Latina/o student failure is often the result of historic school segregation

and the subsequent limited opportunities to learn afforded to African American and Mexican American students in Texas' public schools.

Using data from the Austin Independent School District (AISD), Valencia (2000) shows the detrimental impact segregated schooling has on African American and Mexican American student academic achievement. Valencia demonstrates that segregated schools produce inferior schooling and diminish academic performance evidenced by lower high-stakes standardized test scores. Valencia's study notes that an increase in the percentage of minority student enrollment in AISD schools correlated with an increase in the percentage of students who failed the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) (Valencia, 2000). Valencia also found that students who attended high minority schools were more likely to be taught by noncertified teachers who were often more likely to teach in schools with lower test scores indicating that there is a direct correlation between teacher certification and students' test performance (Valencia, 2000).

Fassold (2000) also showed that exit-level testing has a disparate impact that ultimately harms African American and Latina/o students, especially because they attended the lowest accredited schools. Latina/o and African American students are also disproportionally tracked into lower level math courses, which has a long-lasting impact on educational access especially since advanced math courses are often gatekeeping subjects (Fassold, 2000, p. 477). Poor school quality and culturally irrelevant school curricula negatively impact learning opportunities and are correlated with low test performance, which is strongly associated to disparity in educational opportunity in Texas's public schools (Fassold, 2000). Additionally, since the implementation of the

high school exit exam in 1991, 35-40% of African American and Latina/o students tend not to persist through high school graduation (Haney, 2000. p. 92). Considering this socio-political context of education in Texas, Latina/o students, especially those of low socioeconomic backgrounds, generally have limited positive learning opportunities that make it difficult to be academically prepared and eligible to apply and enroll into four-year colleges or universities. Coupled with dwindling funding opportunities, Latina/o students are often limited to community college systems as their only option of entry into higher education.

Once at the community college Latina/o students have many barriers that interrupt, delay, or prevent them from transferring to a four-year college or university. Using 1992 data from the first-time-in-college (FTIC) cohort comprised of 51, 903 students attending community colleges in Texas, Burley, Butner, and Cejda (2001) found that about two thirds of the students who participated in the study were enrolled in developmental education courses. Results from this study showed that the dropout/stopout patterns experienced by first-time-in-college students were highly associated with GPA. The best performing students were those who did not stop out, but who consistently enrolled for five consecutive semesters. Seventy-five percent (75%) of students who enrolled for five consecutive semesters had a GPA of at least a 2.0, as opposed to students who only enrolled one semester, 25% of whom earned a 2.0 GPA or higher.

Similarly, Alexander, García, González, Grimes, and O'Brien (2007) used participant observation and case studies to examine transfer barriers for U.S. Latina/o and

Latina/o immigrant students in the Dallas County Community College District (DCCCD). Alexander et al. (2007) demonstrated the importance of Latina/o student enrollment in college preparatory courses throughout high school as a way to prevent future enrollment in remedial courses at the community college, which ultimately delay and/or prevent Latina/o community college students from transferring to four-year colleges and universities.

Non-academic barriers also impact the transferability of Latina/o community college students. Using the Lanaan-Transfer Students Questionnaire (L-TSQ) with 66 students who transferred from one of the seven Dallas County Community College District Colleges (DCCCD) to an in-state public research university in Texas, Lanaan and Starobin's (2004) study revealed key student attitudes and behaviors regarding the transfer process. Lanaan and Starobin (2004) found that students generally believed that the community college could improve their transfer articulation agreements to successfully complete the prerequisite classes to transfer because this would determine their future success at the university. Students also identified the need to have supportive advisors to assist with the transfer process and especially the need to be introduced to and exposed to the admissions office at the four-year college (Lanaan & Starobin, 2004). Alexander et al. (2007) also found two other relevant non-academic barriers for Latinas/os including having limited financial aid resources, which either prolonged or prevented the pursuit of transferring and that Latina/o students experience cultural and social disconnection upon transferring to four-year institutions. Latina/o community college students tend to experience alienation and isolation, especially since many

selective institutions are predominately white (PWIs), whereas community colleges tend to be more diverse (Alexander, et al., 2007).

Despite the academic and non-academic barriers and challenges, Latina/o students do transfer to four-year colleges and universities. Klement (2012), for example, analyzed how well selected institutional characteristics explain the variance in Latina/o community college students' transfer rates to 4-year institutions. Klement's (2012) findings suggest that the presence of Latina/o faculty on community college campuses is the highest indicator of positive influence on the transfer rates for Texas Latina/o students. Her study also supports college readiness as a factor in Texas Latina/o student transfer rates, as indicated in the positive relationship between successful Texas Success Initiative (TSI) scores and its effect on community college transfer rates. Klement (2012), interestingly, found no significant correlation between locale (location) and transfer rates for Texas community college students. Identifying these successful Latina/o community college student transfer characteristics is important in addressing policy and practice and the following section therefore describes potential promising models that higher education practitioners at four-year universities can implement to ensure that more Latina/o community college students transfer to their institutions. For the purpose of this study the following paragraphs will focus on discussing the emergence of transfer function and the roles community colleges and four-year universities play in it.

Emergence of the Transfer Function

The transfer function has been part of the community college mission since the first community college opened in 1901. Students would enroll in a community college

and complete their first two years of their undergraduate degree and then transfer to a four-year institution to complete their baccalaureate degree. Fulfilling the first two-years was certified by finishing the Associates of Arts (A.A) degree or the more specialized Associate of Science (A.S.) degree depending of the program of study. The underlying transfer mission of the community college was assumed to be strictly one way, from the community college to a four-year institution and after completing an A.A or an A.S. degree (Townsend, 2001). Despite the original goals of the community college transfer mission, today students use the community college in different ways, current common transfer patterns include upward transfer, to a four-year institution, lateral transfer, to another two-year institution, and simultaneous enrollment in two or more community colleges (Bahr, 2009). For the purposes of this study, I will focus on describing the lateral transfer process between Latina/o community college students transferring to a public Texas university. In the next sections I will describe the roles both the community college and the four-year university plays within the upward transfer mission and then I will describe the transfer gap between the community college and the four-year university amongst community college students.

Community College Role Within the Transfer Function

Since the beginning of the 20th century, as an open-admission institution the community college offered students the opportunity to complete the first two-years of their baccalaureate education (Boggs, 2010) Additionally, the Truman Commission report of 1947 strived to democratize higher education by recommending that community colleges expand nationally and provide universal access to post-secondary education.

This created a philosophical shift going from the belief that higher education was an instrument to continue building the intellectual elite to becoming the means by which every citizen, youth, and adult, was enabled and encouraged to pursue higher learning (President's Commission, 1947). Today the community college plays a critical role in the bachelor's degree attainment, as 28% of students earning a bachelor's degree begin their post-secondary education at a community college (Mullin, 2012).

Furthermore, community colleges have taken action to fulfill the promise of the transfer function, some examples include, community colleges developing "honors" programs to improve the chances students get admitted into more prestigious four-year institutions. In addition, community colleges have developed course-by-course articulation agreements with individual four-year institutions. Lastly, to increase the baccalaureate attainment for community college students, community colleges have created partnerships with four-year institutions to offer courses that count towards the bachelor degree at the community college (Townsend and Wilson, 2006)

Four-year University Role Within the Transfer Function

As stated earlier the transfer function has primarily been evaluated from the perspective of the community college (Bahr, et al., 2013) and although there is limited to no literature on what the role of the four-year college or university within the transfer function should be, there are a few examples suggesting tension between the community college and the four-year institutional culture. For example, Grachan (2013) suggests that current enrollment management models have allowed four-year institutions to take a passive role within the transfer function. By universities prioritizing the enrollment and

retention of freshmen students this directly determines the number of potential community college transfer students they may enroll. In addition, Hendel and Herrera (2012) discuss the tension between the community college and four-year universities' institutional cultures and the impact these differences have on the transfer function. They state that community colleges and highly selective four-year institutions were

established in different centuries, built for the needs of different groups of students, and possess fundamentally different missions. While community colleges and four-year institutions are devoted to student achievement, each side looks to the other, not with suspicion, but rather with disinterest, often de-valuing a collective approach toward the greater student transfer success. Yet these institutions are inextricably linked because students attending a community college must transfer to a four-year institution to earn the baccalaureate degree (p. 3).

This quote speaks directly to the disconnection between the community college and the four-year institutional cultures and commitment to the transfer function that persists today. It is clear that these institutions were established in different social, political and economic circumstances to serve the specific needs and goals of college students at the time. However, given the current undergraduate enrollment showing that almost half of the undergraduate students in post-secondary education in the United States are enrolled at the community college (Hendel and Williams, 2012), community colleges and four-year institutions should take a more pro-active role in aligning their missions towards the transfer function. This will result in increasing both access and graduation rates of community college students nationwide.

Recently there has been an emergent group of scholars and higher education practitioners (Ceja & Perez, 2010; Jain et. al, 2011; Handel, 2012; Strempe, 2013; and

Núñez & Yoshimo, 2016) that have started contributing to the literature describing the role that four-year institutions should take within the transfer function. These scholars and higher education practitioners have developed transfer models that attempt to eliminate institutional barriers and strengthen the transfer function from the community college to four-year universities, that will be discussed later in this literature review.

Transfer Gap

Despite the community college being an open-admission institution of higher education dedicated to the transfer mission, transfer access from the community college to a four-year college or university for the majority of community college students aspiring to transfer is still unattainable. Community colleges with a higher enrollment of African American or Latino students tend to have a lower 6-year transfer rate (Wassmer, Moore, and Shurlock, 2004). Higher education researchers have found that it is not enough for students to get through the “open door” of the community college open-admissions policy (Dougherty & Kienzl, 2006) and reveal factors associated to student’s social backgrounds to account for not transferring. Community college students who are less likely to transfer to a four-year college or university are more likely to come from low socio-economic status, are African American and or Latino students, and enter the community college as older students, 30 years old and above (Dougherty & Kienzl, 2006). Furthermore, the experiences of Latina/o students who navigated the community college pathway revealed the need for institutional “transfer agents” to support qualified Latina/o community college students to overcome both informational and cultural

barriers associated with transferring into selective four-year institutions (Bensimon and Dowd, 2009).

Policies Impacting the Transfer Function

A possible explanation for the existing transfer gap may be acquired by looking at the literature regarding policies that may impact the transfer function. These policies may provide us with additional insights into the low transfer rates for Latina/o community college students. For example, Boswell (2004) provides five potential policy related issues affecting the overall baccalaureate attainment, through transfer and articulation practices and policies. Boswell describes five main challenges that impact the transfer function, these are; the misalignment between high school graduation standards and college entrance requirements, the inadequate or non-existent student record systems that have the ability to track students from high school to the community college and on to the university, upper division transfer slots being eliminated due to budget cuts and state appropriations, in many states the significant shift from need-based to merit-based financial aid, and finally the interpretations of accreditation requirements by specialized accrediting agencies. Additional studies looking at how policies affect the transfer function specifically for students of color provide additional insights regarding some of the practices and policies described above.

A critical policy analysis of transfer policies in seven states (California, Florida, Michigan, Minnesota, Texas, Washington, and Wisconsin) affecting community college students of color conducted by Chase, Dowd, Pazich, and Bensimon (2014) revealed three key findings. First, the authors found that with the exception of California,

legislative statutes and regulations concerning transfer were written in a “color-blind” manner. Legislation in these states “does not recognize and explicitly seek to remediate the impact of racism on minoritized groups has contributed to intractable racial-ethnic inequities in postsecondary participation and outcomes” (p. 698). Second, race and ethnicity are more likely to be referenced in accountability indicators or strategic planning documents than in enacted legislation. Finally, the researchers revealed a disconnection between legislation and accountability, in which equity goals were stated in these states planning documents or legislation but were not monitored through accountability policies.

This analysis of policies is important to understand because it shows that in some of these states mentioned above there is no intentionality behind these policies to provide tangible opportunities for students impacted by a racist and discriminatory educational system. This is a major problem specifically for students of color because they are the most affected, specially those who use the community college as a pathway into higher education. In addition, this analysis also highlights the need to have a better accountability system at the local and state levels that keeps both policy makers and institutions of higher education accountable to provide accountability polices that will ensure that these transfer policies become programs and practices benefiting students of color who begin their post-secondary education at a community college.

For Latina/o students there may be a positive outcome depending on the state they are enrolled in. For example, in their study exploring the impact of varying transfer articulation policies on first-generation and minority students, Gross and Goldhaber

(2009) found that Latina/o students on average have a 20 percent lower chance of transferring to a four-year college in states that do not have transfer policies set in place, compared to a 78 percent higher chance of transferring when they attend a community college in a state with transfer policies. This makes establishing transfer policies and articulation agreements between community college and universities critical in high Latina/o populated states.

Latina/o/x Community College Transfer Student Experiences at Four-Year Universities

Studies looking at the experiences of community college transfer students usually focus at looking at the experiences of “students of color” in general (Wawrzynski & Sedlacek, 2003). Therefore the following studies contribute to the emerging research agenda that highlight the transfer experiences of Latina/o community college transfer students at four-year college or universities.

For example, Castro and Cortez (2016) used a qualitative research approach, to describe the experiences of Mexican community college transfer students at a research-intensive institution in the Pacific Northwest. In their study intersectionality as a way of analyzing how the different identities including being Mexican shaped their experiences within the power and oppressive forces embedded within the transfer process, played a major role in the lived experiences of Mexican community college transfer students. Their experiences as Mexican community college transfer students highlight aspects of their ethnoracial identity, age, and class that made them feel isolated from the rest of the university student community. For example, students described feeling racial isolation

because they were the only Latinas/os in their major and in the courses they enrolled in. Aside from being Mexican some students also developed anxieties for being older non-traditional university students. One student also felt the pressures of having to work and take out loans to pay his way through college, versus students who have the privilege to attend college without having financial worries. Another student also developed feelings of isolation by being around students he perceived were naturally smarter than him and not being able to be part of any study groups (Castro & Cortez, 2016).

Rivas (2012) describes similar conditions in her study of Chicana/Latina transfer students at a four-year university in California. Her participants experienced different forms of overt racism, classism, ageism, and linguisticism. These were heightened as a result of them being transfer students. A good example of this was an encounter Vanessa, one of eight participants, had with a White female English faculty member once she transferred to a University of California (UC) campus. The faculty member made the following comment in class, “Well, okay. I know ya’ll transfer students and it’s obvious that ya’ll can’t write, and you don’t know how to write, so I have a lot of work to do!” (p. 72). This comment describes the deficit perspective of the professor regarding community college transfer students’ abilities to write academically. Her perceptions can be associated with how community colleges have been seen as institutions that are academically less rigorous. Additionally, these students were experiencing what Rivas (2012) describes as Transferism, the various forms of institutional neglect and disrespect against individuals that are community college transfer students at four-year universities (p. 67). The students were also experiencing transfer-deficit perspectives including the

following (1) faculty not calling on the *Mujeres* to participate in class; (2) ignoring, disregarding or rushing the *Mujeres* out of office hours when they sought academic assistance; (3) assuming the *Mujeres* did not aspire or held the potential to pursue graduate school; (4) ignoring the *Mujeres*' contributions in class and assuming they were "empty vessels"; and (5) perpetuating the "traditional" college experience as those entering the four-year institution right after high school (Rivas, 2012, p. 108).

For Latina/o students in STEM their experiences, as community college students are similar in that Latinas/os in STEM have challenges integrating into their new institution and are confronted with an unfriendly university environment. For example, Rivera's (2007) study on Latina/o students in STEM, who begin their pursuit of an engineering degree at a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) community college and transferred to a four-year university, revealed that students experienced a "transfer shock" in two main ways, first, when participants described having a negative relationship with the engineering faculty and or their teaching assistants at the university. This was due to the lack of availability and uncaring attitude demonstrated by university professors and teaching assistants. Second, students felt isolated in their engineering classes. This was more pronounced by the Latina female participants. The lack of females in these classes created an environment that made them feel academically inadequate to their male engineering counterparts, even though Latina participants had already experienced prior success in engineering classes at the community college (Rivera, 2007).

Studies documenting the experiences of Latina/o STEM majors from non-HSI institutions also reveal similar challenges experienced by the participants in Rivera's

study. For example, Valenzuela's (2006) study on Latina STEM community college students transferring to the University of California Irvine and to California State University Fullerton, also highlights as previously stated, how academically and successful women in STEM majors felt inferior to others in their courses, as a result of being Latinas in STEM. This study sheds light to new findings, including the different teaching styles between the community college and the university experienced by her participants; transfer students experiencing an unfriendly campus to the extent of not being able to get involved in extra-curricular activities.

From the perspective of Latina/o STEM community college transfer students who transferred to a highly selective private institution, Cobian (2008) describes his participants experiencing similar feelings of the campus environment as not being a supportive environment for Latina/o community college transfer students, including perceptions of ability leading to self-doubt. In addition, his participants experienced feeling unwelcomed at their New Student Orientation because the emphasis of the orientation was on newly admitted first-year students, transfer students were not mentioned nor were their issues addressed. Additionally, this unwelcoming environment also involved students' admissions notices and their financial aid packages. Participants in this study were notified of their admissions and financial aid late and in some cases this was after they had already heard back from other universities. As a result, once students accepted their admissions, they had challenges meeting with advisors, finding open classes to enroll in, finding housing near campus, student allotted parking space, and most importantly their financial aid was delayed. All of these contributed to students

developing high levels of stress, self-doubt, and feeling disconnected from the university (Cobián, 2008).

A study that offers a more positive experience for Latina/o STEM community college transfer students is Hagler's (2015) study that revealed that Latina/o community college transfer students join and benefit from joining student organizations on campus. The majority of the participants were involved with at least one club or professional engineering society at Pinehill University, including: Society of Hispanic Engineers (SHPE), American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE), American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME), and Society of Women Engineers (SWE) (Hagler, 2015, p. 101). Joining student organizations kept students motivated and helped them persist at the university. Additionally, Hagler's (2015) research highlights how the transfer experience provided Latina/o community college transfer students with opportunities for personal development. In general participants described this transition as a significant experience that fostered personal reflection and recognition of areas in their lives that had to change in order for them to reach their full potential (Hagler, 2015, p. 107).

Student Agency Navigating Predominantly White Institutions

From the studies cited above we see that historically Latina/o community college transfer students have experienced an unfriendly campus environment due in part to their status as community college transfer students. The following literature highlights the agency and cultural production of Latina/o students at Predominantly White Institutions. Rivas (2012) describes how eight Chicana/Latina *Mujeres*, developed and practiced their Chicana navigational resiliency as a result of being community college transfer students

to combat the different forms of overt racism, classism, ageism, and linguistic they experienced as a result of them being transfer students. This Chicana navigational resiliency was developed through their Chicana Transfer Epistemology and their Familial Epistemic *Consejos* (Rivas, 2013). Their Chicana Transfer Epistemology is “the wealth of knowledge and experiences they possess as a result of starting their postsecondary education at the community college” (p.98). Furthermore, their transfer epistemology strengthened the *Mujeres* learning, resiliency, and skills, they developed as transfer students. The *Mujeres* transfer epistemology was invoked as the *Mujeres* reflected on situations they encountered at the community college to circumvent barriers confronted at the four-year institution (Rivas, 2012, p.98). This manifested itself in different ways including, taking ownership of their learning by seeking opportunities to read and present on literatures or projects that reflected their own interests. Additionally, their transfer epistemology, invoked emotions as protective mechanisms. Examples of this were represented when the *Mujeres* either “sneaked out” of an unfriendly discussion section to attend a more intellectually welcoming environment or when the *Mujeres* verbally defended themselves against White faculty. Finally, their transfer epistemology, was also a source for strength to remain committed to their educational goals. This strength was evident in their development of strategic planning, that began when they were at the community college by visualizing and solidifying their educational aspirations. All the *Mujeres* in this study acknowledged the importance of remembering that they began their postsecondary education at the community college acknowledging that they successfully

navigated the community college pathway into the university and the lessons learned along the way (Rivas, 2012).

Additionally, their strength to confront these unfriendly institutional spaces was reinforced with the support of their parents in the form of Familial Epistemic *Consejos* described by Rivas (2012) as, “stemming from their families’ knowledge acquired through the experience of immigrant, working-class background and confrontation with various forms of adversities” (p. 102). *Consejos* were represented by the voices and advice the *Mujeres* gained through their parents and families’ lived experiences (Rivas, 2012). One clear example of the *consejos* these *Mujeres* acquired through their Familial Epistemic *Consejos* was represented by Monica’s parents, who told her ““con una educacion, tu puedes hacer lo que sueñes”” (p. 102). Her parents *consejo* motivated Monica to pursue a formal education despite not knowing what pursuing a formal education meant or what this process entailed.

Valenzuela’s (2006) study also highlights how Latina community college transfer students at the University of California, used their social and cultural capital to build community at their campuses in order to succeed. For example, Latina students applied their social and cultural capital to create an internal network and support system for themselves and other Latina math and science students. This was beneficial in three important ways, first, it allow them to find strength within and among themselves that allowed them to survive in a difficult academic environment. Second, it developed self-awareness of what they brought to the university that supported their transition, and how they are valuable resources to other students of color. Finally, the peer groups were

instrumental during this transition. The peers of these students were vital to their success and persistence at the university.

Looking at the experiences of traditional Chicano/Latino college students at Predominantly White Institutions, Gonzalez (2002) uncovers the elements of campus culture that both prevent and support Chicano student persistence through college. Findings from this study highlight both the elements of campus culture that hindered Chicano student persistence through college and sources of support in forms of “cultural nourishment” for Chicano students. The cultural elements preventing Chicano student’s persistence at this institution were described by Gonzalez (2002) as three cultural systems of asymmetrical representation and were labeled as the social world, the physical world, and the epistemological world. Within the social world, participants experienced marginalization and alienation as a result of a lack of Chicano representation among the students, staff, and faculty on campus, the lack of political power these groups possessed, and the lack of Spanish spoken on campus (Gonzalez, 2002, p. 2002). Additionally, within the physical world, participants continued to be marginalized and alienated due to the lack of Chicano representation in the architecture of the buildings, sculptures, banners, posters, and other physical symbols found on campus (Gonzalez, 2002, p. 2005). Finally, within the third element of the campus culture, the epistemological world, participants experienced marginalization and alienation as a result of, the lack of Chicano knowledge existing and being exchanged on campus (Gonzalez, 2002, p. 2007).

Alternatively, the sources of cultural nourishment that the participants identified within these three worlds involved their family, friends, role-models, language, and

existing cultural work students engaged in. For example, within the social world the most prevalent forms of cultural nourishment were family, friends, music, and their Spanish language. Additionally, within the physical world, sources of cultural nourishment were found in pictures, paintings, posters, and other artifacts that were found in their dorm rooms. Finally, within the epistemological world, the sources of cultural nourishment, were found within family members, Chicana/o literature, Chicana/o faculty, and courses in Chicana/o studies (Gonzalez, 2002, p. 210).

Additionally, Gonzalez (2000) revealed how students resisted and took action against the dominant culture they experienced at a Predominantly White Institution that was responsible for marginalizing and alienating them. In this study participants resisted and took action against the dominant culture of the PWI by transforming each of the social, physical, and epistemological worlds. For example, participants transformed their social world by transforming their workplace. This happened as a result of the participants recruiting their friends into working at the computer center they worked for on campus, each time a position opened up. In addition, participants would speak on behalf of their friends by recommending their friends to their supervisor. As a result, the computer center became well represented by a Chicano student staff and customer population, furthermore this resulting in creating a comfortable environment where Spanish was spoken and Banda music played in the radio behind the courtesy desk (Gonzalez, 2000). Similarly, the participants in this study were able to transform their physical world. This was manifested through the painting of a mural in the student lounge. One of the participants painted a mural to represent culture, the mural was made

up of three important images in Chicana/o history: Cuahtemoc, who represents the great Aztec warriors; Sister Juana Ines de la Cruz, who represents the strength of las mujeres (women) and their fight for equality; and a pachuco, which represents the emergence of the Chicano culture (Gonzalez, 2000, p. 79). Finally, the participants in this study were able to transform their epistemological world by organizing a group of students from MEChA (Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlan) to come to their multicultural class to talk about the history of Chicanos in the southwest. In addition, participants were more concerned about creating a space on campus for Chicanos to come together and discuss ideas and issues about Chicanos with each other, as a result the participants collaborated in the planning of a regional MEChA meeting, where a space was created to have these discussions (Gonzalez, 2000).

These four studies show that Latina/o college students are not merely products of the higher educational system. More importantly they provide examples of Latina/o students enact their agency to resist, navigate, and transform spaces at their predominantly White institutions. These are good examples that provide some guidance into looking at how Latina/o community transfer students navigate and engage in the cultural production of the transfer receptive culture at their four-year institution.

Transfer Models Addressing Transfer From the Lens of a Four-year University

In the attempt to eliminate institutional barriers and strengthen the transfer function from the community college to four-year universities, the “transfer culture” four-year universities need to invest and prioritize their commitment to the transfer function by being purposeful in the development and implementation of programs and policies

with community college transfer students in mind. The following are examples of four current models that address transfer from the lens of a four-year university; the transfer affirming culture (Handel, 2012); the transfer student receptive ecosystem (Strempel, 2013); the phenomenology of transfer (Nuñez and Yoshimo, 2016) and the Latina/o transfer culture (Ceja and Perez, 2010). In the following sections I will discuss each model and provide the strengths and areas of improvement for each model.

Transfer Affirming Culture

Handel's (2012) transfer affirming culture describes a relationship between two- and four-year institutions to provide the necessary resources for students to transfer and earn a baccalaureate degree. The transfer affirming culture model is made up of five elements including:

1. Envisions transfer as a shared responsibility between community colleges and four-year institutions;
2. Views transfer and attainment of the bachelor's degree as expected and attainable;
3. Offers curricula and academic support services that make transfer and degree completion possible;
4. Leverages the social capital that students bring to college in service to their educational goals, and;
5. Includes transfer as an essential element of an institution's mission and strategic visions (p. 416).

This model offers three strengths. First, the model views transfer and attainment of a bachelor's degree as expected and attainable, meaning that transferring is synonymous with attainment of a bachelor degree and does not see it as a separate event. Second, it

acknowledges that community college transfer students bring their social capital into the university and can use it to navigate and negotiate the four-year institution. Third, this model advocates for four-year institutions to include transfer as an essential element of their institution's mission and strategic vision. The transfer affirming culture model is important to developing a strong transfer receptive culture because it seeks to transform the current culture within the transfer function. By this I mean that this model encourages four-year institutions to take a more active role in explicitly describing the transfer function into their institutions mission and vision and include making student transfer and attainment of a bachelor's degree an expectation of their institution. I included this model because it has elements of what a four-year institution transfer receptive culture should develop and practice to ensure that Latina/o community college students are provided with the best opportunities to transfer and succeed at a four-year institution.

Transfer Student Receptive Ecosystem

Strempel's (2013) transfer student receptive ecosystem describes a set of seven transfer student best practices, based on over 45 site visits to various institutions around the country, during a 15 month period, the seven transfer student best practices include:

1. Admissions: Providing a dedicated transfer admissions personnel to serve two linked purposes. First, they intentionally work to meet targets for applicant, admitted, and matriculated transfer students developed by enrollment management leadership. Second, dedicated admissions personnel ensure that a prospective transfer student has a personal advocate (Strempel, 2013).
2. Student Affairs: Establish a peer mentor program to meet the specific needs of community college transfer students and specifically to improve both the transfer and retention rates of underrepresented, underserved, and low-income students. Further, developing purposeful and meaningful transfer student programing, that provides community college transfer students additional opportunities to interact with current

transfer students, staff and administrators who were transfer students, faculty, senior administrators, through participating in transfer specific events and activities sponsored by the university (Strempel, 2013).

3. Academic Affairs: There are three key elements within the academic affairs unit, they are: 1) Locating the transfer efforts within the Provost Office for the highest institutional support and to be better positioned to work across institutional departments. 2) Build an electronic database of all articulated/approved courses to provide clarity, transparency, and consistency in the acceptance of articulated coursework. 3) Establish transfer seminars as well as summer bridge programs for community college transfer students (Strempel, 2013).

4. Financial Aid: Providing dedicated financial aid personnel for community college transfer students. Further, the allocation of institutional financial aid resources and should be targeted to support community college transfer student admission efforts (Strempel, 2013).

5. Housing: Establish guaranteed housing for on-campus-housing for incoming community college transfer students. Additionally, providing students with the opportunity to live in a transfer student community combined with a transfer student forum providing them with a formal in-class learning opportunity connected to the residential experience (Strempel, 2013).

6. Communications/Operations: Establishing an internal communications infrastructure that include continuous cross-campus conversations involving institutional representatives from admissions, financial aid, student affairs, academic affairs, schools/colleges, and advancement as well as alumni. Additionally, forming comprehensive committees that include standing “working groups” as well as a senior leadership advisory board centered on all transfer efforts (Strempel, 2013).

7. Information and Analytics Support: Establish a program of analytic support that would provide both community colleges and four-year institutions with key environmental information (both qualitative and quantitative) that can be used to improve programming and services (Strempel, 2013).

There are five strengths within this model, first the idea of having a dedicated transfer admissions personnel to serve community college transfer students. This allows students to have a go-to person for any questions or issues related the application process. Second, having the student affairs unit be actively engaged in transfer student programing

is another strength. Providing opportunities for community college transfer students to interact with current transfer students, staff and administrators who were themselves transfer students, faculty, senior administrators, through participating in transfer specific events and activities sponsored by the university, is a great way to transition students into their new university environment and to retain them until they graduate because this environment can provide the socio-emotional support community college transfer students need to feel they belong and can succeed at a four-year institution. Third, one of the key strengths of involving the academic affairs unit aside from the resources that can be provided under the provost office is the idea of establishing a summer bridge program or transfer seminars. By universities implementing these academic programs community college transfer students are introduced to the academic culture at the university and will be more academically prepared, invested, and positioned to graduate.

Fourth, offering guaranteed on-campus housing offers another way to ensure community college transfer students succeed at the university. Housing would provide students with the opportunities to live in a transfer student community that would support their social transition. In these communities, students will be able to meet other students who are or who have gone through the transfer process and will help them acclimate to their new environment. Finally, establishing an internal communications infrastructure that includes continuous cross-campus conversations involving institutional representatives from admissions, financial aid, student affairs, academic affairs, schools/colleges, and advancement as well as alumni is also a strength. Community college transfer students experience unique challenges before, during, and after they

transfer to the university that traditional college students don't, therefore establishing an internal communications system across the university campus, will really benefit university student interaction and support and have a positive impact on community college students' transfer experience. The transfer student receptive ecosystem is important to this literature review because it provides a model where that establishes an internal communications infrastructure that engages key institutional representatives from admissions, financial aid, student affairs, academic affairs, schools/colleges, to better support transfer students. Additionally, this model is also important because it encourages four-year institutions to develop a program of analytic support that would provide both community colleges and four-year institutions with key environmental information that can be used to improve programming and services within the transfer function.

Phenomenology of Transfer

Núñez and Yoshimo's (2016) phenomenology of transfer framework was the result of a phenomenological study that examined how students who transferred into a four-year institution experienced their transition. Their findings revealed three phenomenological processes that supported students transitioning into the university:

1. Using Technical Tools: students relied heavily on computer resources, articulation agreements, and other institutional structures in facilitating the transfer process.
2. Interacting with Supportive Institutional Agents: students interacting with supportive institutional agents facilitates the transfer process, reflecting the importance of meaningful human interactions.
3. Actualizing Academic Purpose: transfer students emphasized academic success, academic goals, and career goals over social, co-curricular involvement.

The strengths of this model start with having the voices of students included, so far none of the previous models have included the voices of community college transfer students.

Additionally, this model is strong for the following reasons, first, being aware that students rely heavily on technical tools the universities can make sure that the university websites that are dedicated to transfer student resources and information, including articulation agreements are updated on a week-to-week basis. This would ensure seamless transfer processes for community college students because it would ensure that community college students are up to date with the latest information and requirements regarding their major program of choice. Second, by universities understanding that community college transfer students rely on interacting with supportive institutional agents for their academic and personal success, they would be able to develop programs and practices with this in mind. This can support a personal development day for faculty, staff, and administrators that would provide them with tools on how to effectively interact with and support community college transfer students. Third, actualizing academic purpose provides the university an understanding that community college transfer students are academically oriented. The university can ensure that community college transfers succeed academically by providing them with the academic, social, emotional, and psychological support and services that they need to make sure they accomplish their academic goals. This model is useful in looking at the transfer receptive culture for Latina/o community college transfer students because it describes specific practices that transfer students use during the transfer process as well as provides specific needs they have that traditional college students may not.

Latina/o/x Transfer Culture

For Latina/o students specifically, Perez and Ceja (2010) provide a model that addresses the sociocultural, academic, and financial needs of Latina/o students. Perez and Ceja (2010) use their research, as well as previous scholarship, to outline a Latino transfer culture model. Pérez and Ceja's (2010) framework includes seven components that would make an immediate impact to the schooling and educational experiences of Latino students, these are:

- 1) High school, community college, and university faculty and staff should reflect the Latino student population. Latino role models and mentors who mirror the students provide invaluable resources that reveal college attendance, transfer, and graduation are possible.
- 2) Educational partnerships should connect middle schools with high schools and high schools with higher education institutions to begin preparing Latino students early for college. This includes focusing on improving academic skills. Strengthening 3R (i.e., writing, reading, and arithmetic) subject matter, and providing necessary college and financial aid information, preferably in small learning communities. This type of strategy would also give students the tools necessary to enroll directly from high school to some form of higher education.
- 3) College and universities must streamline their articulation agreements. These agreements are not limited to community colleges to state system transfer requisites but also include individual community college to university requirements necessary for transfer into a specific discipline.
- 4) College outreach programs should be culturally responsive and ought to reflect the specific needs of the Latina/o student population they serve. Such programs would promote college attendance and transfer while instilling in participants a sense of pride in their heritage.
- 5) Higher education institutions need to prioritize and fund outreach programs, practices, and partnerships that facilitate transfer. Part of this funding should be set aside for program evaluation and assessment for constant improvement. An additional related recommendation includes embarking funding for a higher education administrator whose sole responsibility is to coordinate appropriate constituencies and support student transfer.

6) Incentives ought to be provided to higher education institutions that support transfer through evidence-based practices such as an increase in the rate of students maintain continuous enrollment, or a decrease in the rate at which students drop classes, or an increase in the percentage of students who complete an orientation program/course.

7) Financial need-based scholarships must be available for Latina/o students at the community college and 4-year institution. Such scholarships would increase the possibility that students can maintain continuous enrollment, attend full-time, and perhaps reduce work hours (pp. 16-17).

The Latina/o transfer culture model provides several strengths as it addresses the social, emotional, academic, and institutional challenges Latina/o students face in a culturally responsive way in which Latina/o students will get the most out of their educational and schooling experiences. First, this model recognizes the importance of Latina/o students having Latina/o role models and mentors at critical points of the educational pipeline for Latina/o students that can provide meaningful support and resources for students to succeed. Second, this model is strong because it advocates for partnerships, outreach programs, and practices that culturally responsive and promote transfer and engage students from middle school all the way through the four-year college and university. Third, this model also promotes higher education institutions being provided with incentives to ensure that students maintain continuous enrollment. Finally, this model also advocates for both community colleges and universities to work on policies, in the form of articulation agreements in order to streamline the transfer process from the community college to the university. This model provides elements that address the specific needs that Latina/o students face through the k-16 educational pipeline.

The existing models offer great approaches on improving the access, retention, and graduation rates of community college transfer students. Applying these models in my own research study on the transfer receptive culture for Latina/ community college transfer students at TSU, will provide me with additional elements to look for and listen to while I am interviewing my participants. These models will help this study in two critical ways: First, I will be able to evaluate how TSU looks at their role and commitment to the transfer function and their expectations for Latina/o community college transfer students attaining a bachelor's degree. Second, I will be able to analyze how TSU's engages in cross campus collaborations with the offices of admissions, financial aid, student affairs, academic affairs, and the different schools/colleges, to develop and maintain culturally relevant programing and practices that support Latina/o community college transfer students.

Transfer Receptive Culture for Latina/o/x Community College Students: Gaps in the literature

Together the studies on the Latina/o community college transfer student experiences contribute to uncovering some of the covert and overt ways Latina/o community college transfer students are discriminated against or are marginalized because of their ethnic/racial identity, their age, socio-economic status, language, and perceived abilities. In addition, the transfer experience provided Latina/o community college transfer students with opportunities for personal development. The transfer models addressing transfer from the lens of a four-year university provide great examples of what four-year universities need to invest in and prioritize within their commitment to

the transfer function. These examples of transfer models address the structural, social, and academic barriers Latina/o community college students currently face during the transfer process.

Although these studies do a great job at starting to document the lived experiences of Latina/o community college transfer students at four-year colleges and universities there is a huge gap in the literature that looks at the transfer receptive culture for Latina/o community college transfer students and how these students navigate and engage in the cultural production of the transfer receptive culture, and in particular at a public Texas University. Furthermore, these affirming transfer models are great examples of policies, programs and practices that four-year colleges and universities should implement to increase the access, retention, and graduation rates of Latina/o students who begin their post-secondary education at the community college. Despite these bodies of literature, there continues to be a limited discussion on what the four-year university should be doing to strengthen the transfer function for students who start their college careers at a community college and for Latina/o students specifically. Analyzing the transfer receptive culture and how these students navigate and engage in the cultural production of the transfer receptive culture a public Texas University is important and timely.

Cultural production is defined as “the way people actively confront the ideological and material conditions presented by schooling” (Levinson and Holland, 1996, p.14). In this study, I use “cultural production” to describe how Latina/o community college transfer students navigate and engage in the “cultural production” of the transfer receptive culture. By the transfer receptive culture, I mean how Latina/o students navigate the

community college and the four-year university to gain access to or create the resources they need to ensure that they take the appropriate coursework to become eligible to apply, enroll, and successfully earn a baccalaureate degree in a timely manner (Jain et. al, 2011). This provides the opportunity to offer insights and evaluate the transfer culture from the perspective of Latina/o community college students who successfully transferred to a four-year institution. This can highlight the institutional, social, and academic challenges community college students may face during the transfer process, including those associated with racial/ethnic background, gender, age, socio-economic-status, ability, and sexual identity.

Theoretical Frameworks

There are three theoretical frameworks that can help develop a deeper understanding of the transfer culture for Latina/o community college transfer students at a TSU, what brings them together is their goal to provide insights into the skills, knowledge, and networks students of color possess and how they apply them to navigate and negotiate the cultural production of different racist and discriminatory environments in higher education. They are the Transfer Receptive Culture (Jain et. al, 2011), Community Cultural Wealth (Yosso, 2005), Cultural Production (Levinson and Holland, 1996), and the Critical Race Spatial Analysis (Solórzano and Velez, 2016).

Before I turn to the theoretical perspectives I utilize to examine the transfer culture for Latina/o community college transfer students at Transfer Student University, I would like to offer a background on the development of these theoretical perspectives in

relation to their application in educational research, as well as my reasoning in utilizing these frameworks for this study.

Transfer Receptive Culture

The concept of transfer receptive culture draws on Critical Race Theory (CRT) in education to look at the relationships between community colleges and selective four-year colleges and universities. Critical Race Theory (CRT) was developed out of Critical Legal Studies in the 1970's by legal scholars who were dissatisfied over the slow pace of racial reform in the United States (Delgado, 1995). In Education, Gloria Ladson-Billings (1995) introduced CRT into education. Soon after Solórzano (1998) provided the premise to develop a CRT in Education. Solórzano revealed that CRT in Education, “challenges ahistoricism and the unidisciplinary focus of most analyses, and insists on analyzing race and racism in education by placing them in both a historical and contemporary context” (p. 123). Solórzano provided five tenets, that form the basic perspectives, research methods, and pedagogy of a critical race theory in education: (a) the centrality and intersectionality of race and racism; (b) the challenge to dominant ideology; (c) the commitment to social justice; (d) the centrality of experiential knowledge; and (e) the interdisciplinary perspective. CRT in education has....

Drawing from CRT, Jain, Herrera, Bernal, & Solórzano (2011) expand on each tenet to show how they can inform a transfer receptive culture in higher education. The first tenet, the centrality and intersectionality of race and racism, allows us to see transfer as a racialized phenomenon. Jain et al. point out that even though the majority of students enrolled in the community colleges nationwide are students of color with high aspirations

of transferring to four-year institutions, they transfer in low numbers. They also mention that in colleges with predominantly Latino or African American student enrollment, the transfer rates are even lower. For these two reasons, the authors claim that race needs to be central when analyzing the transfer commitment made by highly selective four-year institutions to welcome transfer students of color (Jain et al., 2011). The second tenet, the challenge to dominant ideology, proposes to reconsider transfer as something not only something the community college is responsible for facilitating. The authors point out that by examining the transfer function from the perspective of a four-year institution, the transfer function becomes a two-way process making an explicit commitment to value transfer students. In addition, seeing how community college students are often stigmatized as less smart than their peers at the four-year institutions, the authors propose that four-year institutions actively seeking out community college transfer applicants. Such an approach would show that transfer students can contribute to the university (Jain et al., 2011). The third tenet, the commitment to social justice, enables a vision of transfer as a social justice tool. Jain et al. highlight that for many underrepresented students of color their upward mobility depends on the ability and opportunity to transfer. Seeing how these students either do not transfer or transfer to for-profit colleges and universities, the authors believe that they need to encourage students to transfer to a public selective four-year colleges and hold these institutions accountable to all students is a commitment to social justice (Jain et al., 2011). The fourth tenet, the centrality of experiential knowledge, proposes to seek out student, faculty, and staff perspectives on improving the transfer pipeline to selective four-year institutions. The authors claim that the voices of

those who transfer and those who support them in this process are critical as the university welcomes these students. The authors suggest that seeking their feedback and centering their personal narratives will enable an evaluation of how the four-year institution can strengthen their commitment to the transfer function (Jain et al., 2011). The fifth tenet, the interdisciplinary perspective, encourages drawing from other fields of study to examine the necessary elements of a transfer receptive culture. The authors state that by utilizing theories and methodologies from an interdisciplinary perspective such as those provided by ethnic studies and women's studies, allows for a multidimensional view of a transfer receptive culture that includes issues of sexism and racism. The authors conclude it is important to draw from other academic fields, in addition to CRT, that can contribute to a most comprehensive conceptualization of a transfer receptive culture (Jain et al., 2011).

As a result, Jain et al. (2011) outline five elements that are necessary for elite colleges and universities to establish transfer from the community college as a normalized process to their campus, meaning that community college transfer students should not be used to make up for freshmen admission numbers. A good example of this model is what the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) has been to accomplish. For the last 15 years 40% of their new undergraduate enrollees at UCLA have been community college transfer students (UCLA Office of Analysis and Information Management, 2011, as cited in Jain, et al., 2011), a percentage much higher than most top tier universities. The five elements of TRC employed are divided efforts that are pre and post-transfer, and include:

Pre-transfer:

1. Establish the transfer of students, especially nontraditional, first-generation, low-income, and underrepresented students, as a high institutional priority that ensures stable accessibility, retention, and graduation.
2. Provide outreach and resources that focus on the specific needs of transfer students while complimenting the community college mission of transfer.

Post-transfer:

3. Offer financial and academic support through distinct opportunities for nontraditional=reentry transfer students where they are stimulated to achieve at high academic levels.
4. Acknowledge the lived experiences that students bring and the intersectionality between community and family.
5. Create an appropriate and organic framework from which to assess, evaluate, and enhance transfer receptive programs and initiatives that can lead to further scholarship on transfer students (Jain, et al., 2011, p. 252).

A Transfer Receptive Culture framework is essential to this study because it provides a framework that highlights how the institutional culture at Transfer Student University acknowledges the lived experiences Latina/o community college transfer students bring to the university and the intersectionality between community and family. Castro and Cortez (2016) support focusing on the lived experiences and intersectionality of students because intersectionality provides an opportunity to more accurately understand how identities such as race, gender, class, sexuality, among others, for example-are not individual accounts of identity so much as they are reflections of larger organizational systems of power and oppression (as cited in Cooper, 2015, CC p.80-81) Through this framework we will be able to understand two things; first, we will be able to understand how the university engages with potential Latina/o community college transfer students during the transfer process and evaluate their transfer policies and

programming targeted in providing access, retention, and graduation of Latina/o community college students. Second, we will also be able to understand how the university acknowledge the lived experiences and intersectionality Latina/o community college transfer students bring to the university.

The Community Cultural Wealth Model

The Community Cultural Wealth (CCW) model developed by Tara Yosso (2005) describes the array of knowledge, skills, abilities and contacts possessed and utilized by Communities of Color to survive and resist macro and micro-forms of oppression (p.77). Additionally, Yosso's CCW model also challenges Pierre Bourdieu's traditional forms of cultural capital which has been used to explain why Students of Color do not succeed at the same rate as Whites (p.76). For Bourdieu cultural capital, social capital, and economic capital can only be acquired in two ways, from one's family and/or through formal schooling (Bourdieu and Passeron,1977) Further, Yosso describes that by these standards the dominant groups within society are able to maintain the power because access to acquiring and learning strategies to use these forms of capital for social mobility are limited. She states that Bourdieu's interpretation of capital places White middle-class culture as the standard, making all other forms and expressions of "culture" are judged in comparison to this norm (Yosso, 2005, p. 76). Therefore the CCW model draws from CRT to highlight the forms of cultural capital that marginalized groups have that traditional cultural capital theory ignores and devalues. Yosso's CCW model is made up of six capitals, aspirational, linguistic, familial, social, navigational, and resistant capitals, they are defined below:

1. Aspirational capital refers to the ability to maintain hopes and dreams for the future, even in the face of real and perceived barriers.
2. Linguistic capital includes the intellectual and social skills attained through communication experiences in more than one language and/or style.
3. Familial capital refers to those cultural knowledges nurtured among familia (kin) that carry a sense of community history, memory and cultural intuition
4. Social capital can be understood as networks of people and community resources.
5. Navigational capital refers to skills of maneuvering through social institutions.
6. Resistant capital refers those knowledges and skills fostered through oppositional behavior that challenges inequality (pgs, 77-80).

A Community Cultural Wealth Model (Yosso, 2005) in this study offers the opportunity to highlight how Latina/o community college transfer students draw from and use their CCW to navigate and negotiate the transfer receptive culture at TSU. It is important to this study because it intends to highlight Latina/o community college transfer students have strengths and knowledge that are part of their family, community, and their identities as Lartinas/os.

Cultural Production

Cultural production is a theoretical construct, which allows for the portrayal and interpretation of the way people actively confront the ideological and material conditions presented by schooling (Levinson and Holland, 1996, p.14). In other words, cultural production provides direction for understanding how human agency operates under powerful structural constraints. It is through the production of cultural forms, created within the structural constraints of sites such as schools, subjectivities form and agency develops (Levinson and Holland, 1996). In this study, the cultural production framework

is important because it provides insights into how Latina/o community college transfer students navigate and engage in the production of the transfer receptive culture that may not already be in place for them to be able to succeed at Transfer Student University.

Critical Race Spatial Analysis

To analyze the spatial transfer receptive culture for Latina/o/x community college transfer students at TSU, I will be using a Critical Race Spatial Analysis (Solórzano and Velez, 2016). A CRSA is appropriate for this since it looks at how structural and institutional factors divide, constrict, and construct space to impact the educational experiences and opportunities to students based on race (Solórzano and Velez, p. 430).

Together these three theoretical frameworks allow for a critical look at how Latina/o community college transfer students confront the covert and overt ways Latina/o students are institutionally discriminated against and/or marginalized because of their ethnic/racial identity, gender, sexuality, age, language, ability, status as community college transfer students and most importantly how these students apply their community cultural wealth to create and continue to produce the transfer receptive culture they need to successfully maintain themselves and graduate from Transfer Student University.

The goal of this project is to do this in two ways, first, at the institutional level, in engaging in the production of what Jain et al. (2011) define as the transfer receptive culture, that is, to navigate the community college, take the appropriate coursework, apply, enroll, and successfully earn a baccalaureate degree in a timely manner (Jain, Herrera, Bernal, Solórzano, 2011, p. 252). Second, at the campus level in engaging in the production of what Kuh and Hall (2003) define as campus:

The collective, mutually shaping patterns of institutional history, mission, physical settings, norms, traditions, values, practices, beliefs and assumptions which guide the behavior of individuals and groups in an institution of higher education and which provide frames of reference for interpreting the meanings of events and actions on and off campus (Kuh and Hall, 1993, p. 2, as cited in Kuh, 1993).

In order to capture how Latina/o community college transfer students navigate and engage in the cultural production of the transfer receptive culture at Transfer Student University, I believe that it is necessary to move beyond traditional notions of culture in order to avoid making generalizations of the transfer receptive culture of this university and about how Latina/o students navigate and engage in the cultural production of the transfer receptive culture. To do this I rely on (Gutierrez and Rogoff, 2003; and Gonzalez 2005;) who challenge traditional notions of culture by providing more complex descriptions of how culture can be used in education.

For example, Gutierrez and Rogoff (2003) suggest using a “cultural-historical” approach to describing cultural regularities. This approach will allow us to expect regularities in how cultural communities organize their lives in addition to being exposed to the variations in the ways individual members or groups participate and conceptualize the means and ends of their communities’ activities (p.22). Finally, adopting a cultural-historical approach assumes that individual development and disposition must be understood in cultural and historical context (Gutierrez and Rogoff, 2003, p. 22). For example, Gutierrez and Rogoff (2003) claim that in this way we can discuss people’s patterns of approaches to situations without minimizing their actions towards their current situation because they are migrant farm workers or English-language learners.

Gutierrez and Rogoff's (2003) piece has implications for my study at two levels, first, it provides the space to look at the institutional and campus culture at TSU in a cultural-historical way by providing me with the lens to look at the culture in a more complex way. For example, at the institutional it would be beneficial to look at the transfer receptive culture for other racial/ethnic minority groups for the past 10 years.

Furthermore, for the campus culture it would be beneficial to look at any and all programs created with community college transfer students in mind, including but not limited to academic and non-academic programs. Second, when it comes to analyzing how Latina/o navigate the institutional and campus culture, it provides a lens to focus on how each student navigates their experiences differently. At the same time, this interpretation of culture provides a lens to highlight students lived experiences and the intersectionality since each day in their day-to-day experiences as Latina/o community college transfer students.

The following chapter describes this study's research design and methodology. It includes a description of the participants, the site, the data collection and procedure and data analysis undertaken to address the research questions. The chapter will conclude with the researchers' ethical and validity based considerations and the researchers' positionality.

Chapter 3: Methods

Introduction

This chapter describes the study's research design and methodology. It includes an explanation of the sample, data collection and procedure, and data analysis that will be undertaken to address the research questions. First, I will describe the research paradigm consideration. Next, I will describe my research tools and selection. This will be followed by participant and site selection and a description the data collection and the data analysis process. This section will conclude with a description of the site and a chapter summary. The chapter will conclude with the researchers' ethical and validity based considerations and the researchers' positionality. To reiterate, the purpose of this qualitative study is first, to identify key institutional practices that reveal the transfer receptive culture for Latina/o/x community college transfer students, at Transfer Student University. Second, this study also attempts to highlight the Latina/o/x community college transfer student's cultural production through the transfer process. Its unique contribution to the literature is that it offers the first examination of the transfer receptive culture at a Texas public university, for Latina/o/x community college students. A second unique contribution is the inclusion and analysis of interviews with community college transfer students on their experiences with the receiving institution during the different stages of the transfer process including, pre-transfer at their community college, transition, and during their first semester as university students. Finally, and more importantly this study also contributes to the literature on how Latina/o/x community college transfer students

navigate and engage in the “cultural production” of the transfer receptive culture of the transfer receptive culture at a Texas public university.

As stated earlier the literature review for Latina/o/x community college transfer students revealed three main themes: first, the literature reveals some of the ways Latina/o/x community college transfer students are discriminated against or are marginalized because of their ethnic/racial identity, their age, socio-economic status, language, and perceived abilities. Second, the literature highlights how the transfer experience provided Latina/o/x community college transfer students with opportunities for personal development. Third, the literature also provided ways on how Latina/o/x community college transfer students practice their agency when navigating the transfer process from the community college into the four-year university. Additionally, the transfer models discussed earlier addressed transfer from the lens of a four-year university which provided great examples of what four-year universities need to invest in and prioritize within their commitment to the transfer function. These examples of transfer models address the structural, social, and academic barriers Latina/o/x community college students currently face during the transfer process.

Although these studies do a great job at starting to document the lived experiences of Latina/o/x community college transfer students at four-year colleges and universities there is a huge gap in the literature that looks at the transfer receptive culture for Latina/o/x community college transfer students and how these students navigate and engage in the cultural production of the transfer receptive culture, and in particular at a public Texas University. Furthermore, these affirming transfer models are great examples

of policies, programs and practices that four-year colleges and universities should implement to increase the access, retention, and graduation rates of Latina/o/x students who begin their post-secondary education at the community college. Despite these bodies of literature, there continues to be a limited discussion on what the four-year university should be doing to strengthen the transfer function for Latina/o/x students in Texas who begin their post-secondary education at the community college and who aspire to transfer to a Texas public four-year university.

As a result, this study focuses on evaluating the transfer receptive culture for Latina/o/x community college transfer students at Transfer Student University (TSU),⁹ one of the public Universities in the state of Texas. This study is guided by four overarching questions, two related to student experiences and two related to the experiences of administrators, faculty, and staff who work with or on behalf of community college transfer students.

Research Questions Students:

- 1) What is the perceived transfer receptive culture¹⁰ by Latina/o/x community college transfer students at Transfer Student University?
- 2) How do Latina/o/x Community College Transfer students navigate and engage in the cultural production of the transfer receptive culture at Transfer Student University?

⁹ For the sake of anonymity, the study gives this university the pseudonym of Transfer Student University.

¹⁰ The institutional commitment by a four-year college or university to provide the support needed for students to transfer successfully—that is, to navigate the community college, take the appropriate coursework, apply, enroll, and successfully earn a baccalaureate degree in a timely manner (Jain, Herrera, Bernal, Solórzano, 2011, p. 252).

Research Questions Administrators, Faculty, Staff:

- 3) What is the perceived transfer receptive culture¹¹ for Latina/o community college transfer students by administrators, faculty, and staff who work with and on behalf of community college transfer students at Transfer Student University?
- 4) How do administrators, faculty, and staff engage in the cultural production of the transfer receptive culture for Latina/o/x community college students, at Transfer Student University?

Research Paradigm Consideration

Considering the current literature on Latina/o/x community college transfer students there is a general focus by these studies to document their experiences at the community college sector including their academic and non-academic barriers and challenges (Burley, et al., 2001; Lanaan & Starobin, 2004; Alexander, et al., 2007; and Klement, 2012). A more limited amount of literature looks at Latina/o/x community college transfer students within the context of their four-year university experience. These studies (Castro and Cortez, 2016; Hagler 2015; Rivas, 2012; Cobián, 2008; Rivera, 2007; and Valenzuela, 2006) have focused on highlighting the ways in which Latina/o/x community college transfer students are discriminated against or are marginalized because of their ethnic/racial identity, their age, socio-economic status, language, and perceived abilities. Furthermore, only two of these studies (Rivas, 2012; Valenzuela,

¹¹ The institutional commitment by a four-year college or university to provide the support needed for students to transfer successfully—that is, to navigate the community college, take the appropriate coursework, apply, enroll, and successfully earn a baccalaureate degree in a timely manner (Jain, Herrera, Bernal, Solórzano, 2011, p. 252).

2006) highlight the agency Latina community college transfer students enact in navigating the four-year university. Building from these studies, the current research study seeks to identify key institutional practices that reveal the transfer receptive culture for Latina/o/x community college transfer students, at a public Texas university, while also highlighting the Latina/o/x community college transfer student's cultural production of the transfer receptive culture during the transfer process. This research study, will use a transformative research approach (Mertens, 2010) to understand first, how Latina/o/x community college transfer students experience the transfer receptive culture at their four-year institution. Second, and most importantly how these students navigate and engage the social, political, and power based factors, to create the cultural production of the transfer receptive culture they need to apply, enroll, and obtain their bachelor's degree from TSU.

Transformative Research Paradigm

To understand the transfer receptive culture (Jain, et al., 2011) for Latina/o/x community college students and how Latina/o/x community college transfer students engage and produce the transfer receptive culture at Transfer Student University (TSU), I will use a transformative research paradigm. Mertens (2010) highlights four key characteristics that makes the transformative paradigm ideal for this study they are: First, it centers the lived experiences of the diverse groups that, traditionally have been marginalized, including but not limited to women, minorities, and persons with disabilities. Second, it analyzes how and why inequities based on gender, race or ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, and socio economic classes are reflected in

asymmetric power relationships (p.21). Third, it examines how results of social inquiry on inequities are linked to political and social action (p. 21). Fourth, it applies a transformative theory to develop the program theory and the research approach (p.21). In the following section I provide the ontology, epistemology, axiology, and methodologies considerations for a transformative research paradigm approach.

Transformative Research Paradigm: Ontology, Epistemology, Axiology, Methodologies

The transformative paradigm evolves from the point of view that social reality is historically bound and is constantly changing depending on social, political, and power based factors (Neuman, 2010). In this study, a transforming research paradigm is useful seeing how the focus of this study is to explore how Latina/o/x community college transfer students experience the transfer receptive culture (Jain et al., 2011) and more importantly how Latina/o/x community college transfer students navigate and engage in the cultural production (Levinson and Holland, 1996) of the transfer receptive culture. The ontological implications seek to highlight how Latina/o/x community college transfer students view their own social realities as Latina/o/x students within the social, political, and power structures enacted by TSU.

A transformative research paradigm epistemology relies on the idea that knowledge is true if it can be turned into practice that empowers and transforms the lives of people. Furthermore, in this context knowledge is in the collective meaning making by the people that can inform individual and group action that improves the lives of the people. Here knowledge is constructed by the participants' frame of reference. In

addition, the researcher/participant relationship is not based on a power hierarchy but involves a transformation and emancipation of both the participant and the researcher (Chilisa, 2012). For this study, epistemological implications attempt to understand how Latina/o/x community college transfer students make sense of the transfer receptive culture or the lack of and how they create the transfer receptive culture that they need in order for them to be eligible to apply, enroll, and eventually obtain their bachelor's degree from TSU.

A transformative research paradigm axiology is motivated by a moral and political activity that requires them to choose and commit themselves to the values of social justice that further human rights and respect of cultural norms. Objectivity is reached by reflecting and examining their values to ensure that they are appropriate for carrying out the research study (Chilisa, 2012). For this study, the axiology implications seek to privilege the experiences and practices of Latina/o/x community college transfer students by allowing them to speak their truths throughout the whole research process, including the data collection, analysis, interpretation, and dissemination.

Since the purpose of the research under a transformative research paradigm is to destroy myths and false knowledge to empower to act and transform society, the methodologies associated with a transformative research paradigm are based on both quantitative and qualitative methods. Additionally, participants may be involved in identifying the problem, collecting and analyzing the data, dissemination of the findings, and applying the findings to inform practice (Chilisa, 2012). For this study, the qualitative methodologies applied attempt to highlight how Latina/o/x community college

transfer students make sense of their worlds and how they make meaning of and assign meaning to their experiences as Latina/o/x community college transfer students.

Research Tools and Selection

As discussed at the beginning on this study, for the majority of Latina/o/x students in Texas the community college is their main entry point into higher education, unfortunately the majority of First Time College Enrollee Latina/o/x community college students withdraw without obtaining a degree (THECB, 2008a). Reasons as to why they withdraw from the community college without obtaining a degree describe both academic and non-academic barriers. Some of the academic barriers include being academically underprepared in high school and having to enroll in developmental courses (Alexander et al., 2007) and not maintaining consecutive enrollment (Burley, Butner, and Cejda, 2001). Non-academic challenges include, students believing that there was a lack of commitment from their community college towards the transfer function, including having access to supportive advisors to assist with the transfer process and especially the need to be introduced to and exposed to the admissions office at the four-year college (Lanaan & Starobin, 2004). Additional, non-academic challenges included having limited financial aid resources and experiencing cultural and social disconnection upon transferring to four-year institutions (Alexander et al. 2007). Two key factors supporting the transfer success for Latina/o/x community college students in Texas who do transfer to four-year colleges and universities; first the presence of Latina/o/x faculty on community college campuses is the highest indicator of positive influence on the transfer rates for Texas Latina/o/x students. The second, factor is student college readiness as

indicated in the positive relationship between successful Texas Success Initiative (TSI) scores and its effect on community college transfer rates (Klement, 2012). What the current literature about Latina/o/x community college students leaves out for me is the role of the four-year college and or university within the transfer function and more importantly the students agency being performed during this process.

Within the context of a public Texas University this study will examine how the university engages Latina/o/x community college students in the transfer process from the time students are enrolled in the community college to ensure students take the appropriate courses, apply, enroll, and successfully earn a baccalaureate degree in a timely manner (Jain, et al., 2011). At the same time this study will also reveal how Latina/o/x community college transfer students apply their agency to navigate and engage in the culture necessary within the transfers process. To gather insights into the transfer receptive culture for Latina/o/x community college transfer students and on how Latina/o/x students navigate and engage in the creating of the transfer receptive culture at TSU through the overarching questions, qualitative research methods must be employed. Qualitative methods are ideal in this study seeing how qualitative research methods work towards how individuals interpret their worlds and how they make meaning of sense of, and assign meaning to their experiences. Furthermore, a qualitative research approach provides the opportunity to build on concepts and hypothesis from the data being collected versus testing a pre-existing hypothesis (Merriam, 2009).

In order to generate the required data to examine the transfer receptive culture (Jain et. al., 2011) for Latina/o/x community college students and how Latina/o/x

community college transfer students engage in and produce the transfer receptive culture at Transfer Student University, I will be using a case study, semi-structure interviews, and photo elicitation.

A case study provides an approach to research which can capture rich data giving an in depth picture of a bounded unit or an aspect of that unit (Hamilton, 2013, p. 10). Therefore, a case study can be based on any number of units of analysis including but not limited to an individual, a group of individuals, a classroom, a school, or an event (Mertens, 2010). One strength of conducting a case study is that they allow an in-depth illustration of different examples of the population under study (Guthrie, 2013). Using a case study is relevant to my study because I am proposing to explore the transfer receptive culture for Latina/o/x community college transfer students at a particular higher education institution in Texas. A case study would add value to this study because it will allow me to explore the transfer receptive culture (Jain et al., 2011) including, how Latina/o/x community college transfer students are impacted by the campus culture.¹² Further, a case study provides the opportunity to include relevant data that will enhance this study but that it may not be provided by the participants.

Semi-structured Interviews are made up of a list of questions or issues to be explored, without exact wording or order determined ahead of time. (Merriam, 2009).

¹²The collective, mutually shaping patterns of institutional history, mission, physical settings, norms, traditions, values, practices, beliefs and assumptions which guide the behavior of individuals and groups in an institution of higher education and which provide frames of reference for interpreting the meanings of events and actions on and off campus (Kuh and Hall, 1993, p. 2, as cited in Kuh, 1993).

This allow the researcher the flexibility to adjust the interview questions as new ideas are raised .by the participants during the data collection process (Olson, 2011) This design allows for information from different interviews to be comparable at the time of analysis (Guthrie, 2013). Semi-structured interviews are appropriate for this study since I will be evaluating the transfer receptive culture for Latina/o/x community college transfer students through their lived experiences. Semi-structured interviews are of value to my study because it will allow me to ask general questions, engage in conversation, and encourage participants to actively reflect on their community college transfer experiences.

Photo elicitation uses photographs to gain insight about the social and physical elements of persons' environments (Harper, 2002). Photographic elicitation highlights elements of human experiences that are not found in traditional research methods, such as the sensory-visual experiences of people (Awan, 2007). Unlike quantitative and qualitative traditional methodologies, visuals elicit and reveal sensory stimuli that cannot be found in words or statistics (Awan, 2007). Applying photo elicitation to this project is specifically relevant to evaluating how Latina/o/x community college transfer students are impacted by the campus physical culture. Using photo elicitation will add great value to this study as it provides participants with an opportunity to add to the data collection from how they perceive the spatial transfer receptive culture to be. Additionally, using photo elicitation provides a more holistic evaluation of the transfer reception culture (Jain, et al., 2011) since this model does not include a component on the physical campus culture.

Participant and Site Selection

Participant Selection

Gathering the insights of the transfer receptive culture for Latina/o/x community college transfer students at Transfer Student University and how these students engage in the cultural production through the transfer process, requires the selection of specific participants. In this study, my goal was to recruit an equal number of male and female participants. Student participants for this study were recruited in three ways, first students were recruited from a posted recruitment flyer on the Know Events announcements page, a university wide events calendar put together by the university communications and distributed via the university's email newsletter to students, faculty, and staff. Second, students were recruited through snowball sampling (Mertens, 2010). Third, students were recruited from previous courses when the researcher was the students TA or course Assistant Instructor.

To participate in the study students were selected based on the following criteria: 1. Identify as Latina/o/x. 2. Community College Transfer Student. 3. Applied to Transfer and was admitted to Transfer Student University, prior to or during the Fall 2017. 4. Male or Female 5. Between 18 to 25 years old. The target number of student participants was 20 (10 Latinxs/10 Latinxs). In addition, 3-5 (at least one of each) faculty, staff, and administrator who directly work with community college students who transferred to TSU. Faculty, staff, and administrators will be recruited through referrals, posted recruitment flyers on campus, and direct email and telephone calls. For this study

there were a total of 18 participants, the tables below describe student and university personnel participants.

Name	Age	Gender Identity	Race/Ethnicity	College Generational Status	Major
Alejandra	27	Female	Latina	1 st Generation	Speech Language Pathology
Carina	20	Female	Latina	1 st Generation	Communication Sciences and Disorders
Christian	21	Male	Latino	1 st Generation	Civil Engineering
Cruz	20	Male	Latino	1 st Generation	Mechanical Engineering
Daniel	20	Male	Latino	1 st Generation	Aerospace Engineering
Ismael	20	Male	Latino	1 st Generation	Human Dimensions of Organization
Lucia	23	Female	Latina	1 st Generation	Bilingual Education
Mayte	27	Female	Latina	1 st Generation	Bilingual Education
Vanessa	22	Female	Latina	1 st Generation	Bilingual Education
Yosdi	21	Female	Latina	1 st Generation	Bilingual Education

Table 1: Student Profiles

Name	Title	Higher Education Experience in Years	Years at Transfer Student University
Citlali	Associate Director for New Student Services	13	2
Craig	Senior Academic Advisor	7	7
Erica	Associate Academic Advisor	10	6
Jay	Senior Academic Program Coordinator of the Transfer Year Experience Program	10	2.5
Juan	Associate Professor, Psychology	16	10
Lupita	Professor of Sociology	16	16
Mike	Associate Director of Admissions	40	40
Trina	Associate Director with the Office of Financial Aid	16	16

Table 2: University Personnel Profiles

The focus on Latina/o/x community college transfer students was informed by three key factors; first, Latina/o/x undergraduate students in Texas are overwhelmingly enrolled in the community college sector and most leave the community college before earning a degree (THECB, 2008a). Second, although research involving Latina/o/x community college students continues to develop there is a limited literature that examines the transfer receptive culture for Latina/o/x community college students at a Texas public university. Third, and more importantly there continues to be a limited amount of literature highlighting how Latina/o/x community college students apply their agency during the transfer process. Therefore, this study also contributes to the literature on how Latina/o/x community college transfer students navigate and engage in the “cultural production” of the transfer receptive culture at a Texas public university. These

factors combined with the institutional and campus culture make Transfer Student University the ideal site for this study.

Site Selection

Description of Site: Transfer Student University

Transfer Students University (TSU) was selected for this study because it is amongst the top 20 public universities in the nation (<http://colleges.usnews.rankingsandreviews.com/best-colleges/rankings/national-universities/>) and is one of the leading destinations for transfer students, TSU ranks amongst the top 30th nationally and top 10th in the state (<http://colleges.usnews.rankingsandreviews.com/best-colleges/rankings/most-transfers/>) for transfer students. According to the Office of Information Management and Analysis, in 2013 0.1% transfer students were Freshmen, 64% Sophomores, 31.1% Juniors, and 4.8% were Seniors (See Footnote)¹³. These statistics are reflective of the current transfer policies and practices in place at TSU, specific to the FTP program. In addition, in 2012 from 2,279 new Transfer students 7.4% dropped out after one year versus 4.4% out 8,034 First-time freshmen students. (See Footnote)¹⁴

The current student enrollment for Transfer Student University is 51,332, including 43% White, 20% Hispanics (any combination), 4% Black only, 1% Black (2 or

¹³ For the sake of anonymity of the institution, the study retracts this source. For a copy of this and others sources retracted in this study please contact the author.

¹⁴ For the sake of anonymity of the institution, the study retracts this source. For a copy of this and others sources retracted in this study please contact the author.

more, excluding Hispanic), 18% Asian only, 0.2% American Indian only, 0.1% Hawaiian/Pacific Islander only, 3% 2 or more (excluding Hispanic/Black), 10% Foreign, 1% Unknown (See Footnote¹⁵). Current transfer student enrollment is 2,511, including 929 White, 570 Hispanics (any combination), 69 Black only, 23 Black (2 or more, excluding Hispanic), 355 Asian only, 8 American Indian only, 5 Hawaiian/Pacific Islander only, 51 2 or more (excluding Hispanic/Black), 468 Foreign, 33 Unknown (See Footnote). When analyzing current enrollment patterns between overall enrollment and transfer enrollment for Latina/o/x students, we see the current enrollment for both to be about the same, with Latina/o/x transfer student enrollment being slightly higher (by almost 3%) than the overall Latina/o/x student enrollment.

Furthermore, enrollment data shows that students transferred into TSU under the following levels, freshmen (3), sophomore (1,616), junior (811), and senior (81). Additionally, there were 910 students who transferred from a junior college and 1, 601 students transferring from a different senior college (See Footnote). This included, 413/516 White, 246/324 Hispanics (any combination), 27/42 Black only, 12/11 Black (2 or more, excluding Hispanic), 118/237 Asian only, 3/5 American Indian only, 3/2 Hawaiian/Pacific Islander only, 18/33 2 or more (excluding Hispanic/Black), 53/415 Foreign, 17/16 Unknown. Since the majority of transfer students transferring into TSU, are transferring in as sophomores or juniors one of the challenges with this data is that it is not desegregated by type of program and or curriculum students transferring in

¹⁵ For the sake of anonymity of the institution, the study retracts this source. For a copy of this and others sources retracted in this study please contact the author.

followed in order to transfer into TSU. This data does not provide the number of transfer students coming in through the Freshmen Transfer Program or the Freshmen Transfer Program through Co-Enrollment, or through following the guidelines established by the states transfer curriculum. This is important to know and understand as it will allow us to gain insights into who the university invests their time and resources in terms of student population they are trying to recruit to come to TSU.

In 2011, the one to five-year graduation and retention for transfer students was, from a cohort of 2,146 students, 0.1% graduated after 1 year, 7.7% graduated after 2 years, 46.6% graduated after 3 years, 74.3% graduated after 4 years, and 79.6% graduated after 5 years. Additionally, from the 2011 cohort 89.6 % continued after 1 year, 78.8 % continued after 2 years, 36.5 % continued after 3 years, 7.5% continued after 4 years, and 2.7% continued after 5 years (See Footnote). These data is important because it shows that overall students who transferred into TSU consistently enrolled and graduated after 5 years. But again the data does not really tell us much since it is not desegregated by what type of program or what type of certification students completed to be eligible to transfer. Equally important, the data does not reveal the student population by race or ethnicity therefore we don't know the percentage of Latina/o/x community college transfer students who are consistently enrolling and graduating from TSU within 5 years of transferring in.

The one to five-year transfer student attrition showed the percentage of students who were dismissed or who dropped out. For the 2011 cohort, 2.2% were dismissed after 1 year, 2.9% were dismissed after 2 years, 3.5% were dismissed after 3 years, 3.6% were

dismissed after 4 years, and 3.6% were dismissed after 5 years. Finally, the numbers show that 8.1% of transfer students dropped out after 1 year, 10.7% of transfer students dropped out after 2 years, 13.5% of transfer students dropped out after 3 years, 14.6% of transfer students dropped out after 4 years, and 14.0% of transfer students dropped out after 5 years (See Footnote). This data is also important since part of the transfer receptive culture is to ensure that community college transfer students earn their bachelor's degree. Limitations here continue to exist since data is not desegregated by the enrollment status of the students who are dismissed or chose to drop out, they are not desegregated by race or ethnic group, and most importantly there is no reason given for students being dismissed and or choosing to drop out.

Transfer Students Learning Communities (TSLC)

One of the programs that has been institutionalized by the university for transfer students is the Transfer Students Learning Communities (TSLC). During the fall 2015, the School of Undergraduate Studies developed TSLC's for first-semester transfers. A TSLC is a group of 18-25 new transfer students who take one or two courses together during their first semester at UT. Each group meets with a peer mentor and a staff facilitator throughout the semester to discuss timely issues related to the academic transition to campus. TSLC students build communities as they attend classes, study, and participate in various activities and events with their mentor and fellow transfer students.

New transfer students work with their college advisors to find a TSLC with the courses that help fulfill the students' academic interests and degree requirements.

Reserved seats in “course clusters” ensure TSLC students have access to the courses they need. In addition to accessing reserved seats, TSLC students gain exposure to

- TSU resources
- An expanded academic network of peers, faculty, and staff
- Advanced study skills and time management strategies
- Internship, career, and undergraduate research opportunities
- Social opportunities (See Footnote).

Data Collection

For this qualitative study on the transfer receptive culture for Latina/o community college transfer students at a public Texas university, the primary sources of data collection were participant semi-structured interviews, and photo elicitation, data collection began during the spring of 2017 and ended at the end of the fall semester in 2018.

Incoming Latina/o/x community college transfer student participants were interviewed during their first semester as university students, to see how they transition into the university. Current Latina/o/x community college transfer students were interviewed at the time of recruitment. Additionally, faculty, staff, and administrator participants were interviewed during the summer, fall, or spring semesters. The interviews took place on campus where each participant felt safe and comfortable. The interviews were about one hour. Since the methods of this project are based on narrative analysis, the interviews were semi-structured to allow the participants to elaborate on

significant experiences through the transfer process. Interviews were conducted in Spanish, English, or both, depending on what the participant was comfortable with.

All participants were presented with the consent form during the formal interview to discuss the goals of the project. I discussed the information covered in the consent form with the participants, explained the purpose, goals, and any risks associated with this project. The participants were informed of their right to withdraw themselves and their information from the project at anytime. The participants were asked to provide written permission to release their data and any artifacts to me. The participants were provided with a copy of the consent forms. (Attach Consent Form). Additionally, all participants, including any names of people, schools, and institutions mentioned by the participants in their responses were assigned pseudonyms. Interviews, were coded using pseudonyms. All efforts were made to make sure the privacy of the participants is protected.

For this study, I collected my data in the following order: first, I conducted the semi-structured interview and second the collection of photographs via photo elicitation. After conducting the semi-structured interviews, I transcribed each interview manually myself. Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2006) suggest that transcribing should be undertaken by the researcher since this is part of the analysis process engendered by the interacting with the data in an intensive and intimate way. Manually transcribing the interviews also gave me the opportunity to further analyze data, first by listening to the participants experiences a second time and second, it ensured that their voices were captured accurately into text. Once I finished each transcription, I read through the full transcript

one time and added questions and comments as needed. Once this was done I shared the full transcript including my initial questions and comments with my participants, through an individual check in session. This provided them with an opportunity to interact with their own narrative, check for accuracy in my transcription and provide feedback based on my questions and comments.

Following this initial data analysis, I had my participants engage in the photograph collection part of the study through photo elicitation.

Through photo elicitation, I asked each of my participants to collect photographs in order to understand student's perceptions of the spatial transfer receptive culture for Latina/o/x community college transfer students at TSU, students were asked to engage in a two-part photo collection activity. The first part asked students to describe what their own definition of receptive and unreceptive campus spaces/environments were. The second part of this activity asked students to provide a total of three photos and answer a few questions that described each photo they choose to share. Photos were to describe the following:

- Photo #1: a place at the university where you feel that it's a receptive space/environment for you;
- Photo #2: a place at the university where you feel that it's an unreceptive space/environment for you on campus; and
- Photo #3: your favorite place on campus or a place on campus that is the most meaningful to you.

Also, students were asked to label each picture using the following keywords (receptive, unreceptive, and favorite). Also, for each picture students answered the following reflection questions.

Receptive Space/Environment on Campus Photo Reflection Questions

1. What about this physical space/environment makes it receptive?
2. What about the people in the space/environment makes it receptive?
3. If there was one thing you could change about the physical environment to make it more receptive what would it be? Why?

Unreceptive Space/Environment on Campus Photo Reflection Questions

1. What about this physical space/environment makes it unreceptive?
2. What about the people in the space/environment makes it unreceptive?
3. If there was one thing you could change about the physical environment to make it more receptive what would it be? Why?

Favorite or Most Meaningful Space/Environment on Campus Photo

Reflection Questions

1. What about this physical space/environment makes it your favorite/most meaningful space on campus?
2. What about the people in the space/environment makes it your favorite/most meaningful space on campus?

After finishing with this photo data collection and analysis I went through a round of axial coding (Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, 2013), for the data collected through the semi-structured interviews along with the photographs provided by my participants. This

allowed me to make connections between the codes that came out of the semi-structure interviews and the codes that the participants developed through photo elicitation.

Data Analysis

Exploring the transfer receptive culture for Latina/o/x community college transfer students at a public Texas university and how these students navigate and engage in the cultural production of the transfer receptive culture, requires us to look at how students interact with the social, political, and power factors embedded within both the institutional and campus cultures. Data analysis highlights this at two levels, first, by highlighting how the university interacts with potential Latina/o/x transfer students at their community college through outreach to ensure they are transfer eligible and apply. In addition, data analysis also highlights how the university interacts with Latina/o/x students once admitted to ensure a smooth transition, and finally, how the university interacts with them once the student is enrolled to ensure they obtain their bachelor's degree. Second, data analysis also focused on showing how Latina/o/x community college transfer students navigate and engage in the cultural production of the transfer receptive culture at the university, by looking for ways students practice their agency in creating the culture they need to become transfer eligible, apply, enroll, and successfully obtain their bachelor's degree.

Critical Narrative Analysis (Forgas, 2002) was used to analyze data in a recursive and dynamic way (Merriam, 2009) during the transfer process. Finally, data analysis sought to gain an understanding into the transfer receptive culture at this public university through using the transfer receptive culture framework (Jain, et al., 2011). Additionally,

data analysis tried to gain insights into how Latina/o/x community college transfer students engage in culturally producing the transfer receptive culture by using a community cultural wealth model (Yosso, 2005) and a cultural production framework (Levinson and Holland, 1996).

As a tool of analysis Critical Narrative Analysis (CNA) provides the opportunity for us to learn how people create themselves in constant social interactions Forgas (2002) both at the personal and institutional levels. At the same time, CNA provides a way for us to explore how institutional discourses influenced and are influenced by personal everyday narratives (Souto-Manning, 2014). Data analysis then sought to gain an understanding into how verbal and non-verbal institutional discourses at this university are created and interpreted by Latina/o/x community college transfer students and how these discourses may influence how they navigate and engage in culturally producing the transfer receptive culture they need to succeed on a day to day basis.

As a tool for analysis CNA suggests that when people make sense of their experiences through their narratives, they bring together the personal (micro) and the social or institutional (macro) situations into one place (Souto-Manning, 2014). As a result, CNA allows for the critical analysis of narratives in the day-to-day stories people tell within the context of institutional discourses. Using a CNA approach to analyzing my data provided me with the best opportunity to analyze how each of my participant's individual identities based but not limited to on race, gender, class, sexual orientation, ability, and enrollment status, interact with the social, political, and power based factors they experience within the cultural-historical (Gutierrez and Rogoff, 2003) institutional

and campus cultures. Additionally, using a CNA allows me to analyze the interactional positioning (Wortham, 2001) developed in a participant's narrative. Wortham (2001) suggests that an autobiographical narrative do more than represent events and characters, by presupposing a certain version of the social world and position the narrator and audience with respect to that social world and with respect to each other (p. 9) The interactional positioning (Wortham, 2001) in this study is important seeing how participants in this study will be aware of my positionality in this study as a Chicano community college transfer student and this may influence how they position themselves in their narrative and how they narrate their experiences including how their use of voice, language, pitch, intonation, to name a few.

To organize my data I used a thematic experiences analysis approach. This approach is made up of two key characteristics: first, it allows the researcher to look for and identify themes within the participant's narratives and second, experiences usually involve relationships between the participants and contexts (Bold, 2011). My data analysis followed the following sequence: after conducting the semi-structured interviews, I transcribed each interview manually myself. Manually transcription allowed ongoing data analysis, first by listening to participants' experiences a second time, and by ensuring their voice is captured accurately onto text. After transcribing each interview, I read through the full transcript one time and added questions and comments as needed. Once this was done I shared the full transcript including my initial questions and comments with my participants, through an individual check in session. This provided

them with an opportunity to interact with their own narrative, check for accuracy in my transcription and provide feedback based on my questions and comments.

Following this initial data analysis, I had my participants engage in the photograph collection part of the study, through photo elicitation. During this phase of the data collection, I asked each of my participants to collect photographs based on spaces/environments that they felt were receptive, unreceptive, and their favorite/most meaningful as community college transfer students.

After finishing with this photo data collection and analysis I went through a round of axial coding (Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, 2013), for the data collected through the semi-structured interviews along with the photographs provided by my participants. This allowed me to make connections between the codes that came out of the semi-structure interviews and the codes that were developed through photo elicitation. This process also gave me the opportunity to see what general themes emerged from the two data collection sessions.

Once all the data was collected and transcribed from all interviews, photo elicitation, I began a detailed analysis using an open coding process (Crag and Cook, 2007) that included transcriptions, emails, and notes from all the data collected during all of my interactions with each participant. Open coding allowed me to examine the data for codes to categorize the text that emerges from the data collected (Bold, 2011). This process entails taking the raw data, identifying some interesting elements in it and assigning these codes made up of words that represent these elements. This process continues by reviewing the coding, continuing to search for elements that can be

combined and keep working on it until finding a system by which all the data can be evaluated. According to Bold (2011) a thematic approach is effective when the researcher has a clear focus for the research from the beginning and the interview questions lead the participants into providing the information the researcher seeks.

Ethical and Validity Based Considerations

As the principal investigator for this study some ethical dilemmas may arise. First, I am a Chicano, who attended a community college and transferred to a public four-year university similar to Transfer Student University. Having experienced the transfer process myself influences the way I asked the questions and also the way I went about analyzing the data collected. To minimize any bias when asking questions and when analyzing the data, I asked my participants follow up and clarifying questions. Second, as a researcher I hold a certain amount of power since I am the one interacting with the participants, collecting the data, analyzing it, and presenting the findings, through my own interpretations. To minimize this I asked my participants to engage in the analysis portion of the research process so that they have an opportunity to analyze their experiences through their own perspectives. Third, as a male I also hold a certain privilege and power that may manifest itself when interacting with Latina participants during the interviews. This may have caused my Latina participants to answer questions in a certain way and or not answer questions at all. To minimize this, I did my best to create an environment where my Latina participants felt empowered to speak their truths and also allowed my Latina participants to engage or disengage with any part of the data collection process. Finally, as the principal investigator for this study a final ethical

concern that may arise is in the dissemination of the findings. I will minimize this part of the research process by providing my participants with their own copy of their interview transcriptions and a copy of my dissertation.

Given my unique background and experiences as the principal investigator for this study, validity concerns may also arise seeing how I can analyze the data and generate the findings the way that will benefit my own interests. Furthermore, the power differences between my potential participants and I, may have motivated participants to answer my questions by telling me what I wanted to hear. In order to minimize the validity concerns there are several things I did; first, I practiced member check-ins. For the data collected through my semi-structured interviews, I transcribed the interviews verbatim to the best of my ability and provided each participant with their own transcript for feedback on content. This allowed each participant the opportunity to make sure their experiences were represented in the most respectful and authentic way. For the data collected via photo elicitation participants had the opportunity to collect, data. This is in accordance with the transformative research paradigm, (Mertens, 2010) which encourages principal investigators engaging participants in the data collection process. This allowed participants to provide data from their own perspective. I believe that my implementing these practices my participants will play a more active role in the research process and validity concerns will be minimized.

Researcher Positionality

As a Chicano and former community college transfer student it is important to acknowledge my positionality within this project in two ways. First, being a former

community college transfer student myself, I came into this study with a certain bias and privilege because of the way I was transitioned and supported into the university by people who I now consider mentors and mentors. Given my experiences I thought that the experiences of Latina/o/x transfer students coming from Texas community colleges might be similar. Once I realized the lack of visibility of a community college transfer student community on campus and the lack of institutional support afforded to them, I became upset and disappointed by the situation and decided to commit myself to this project. While I may be able to relate with the community college experiences of most of the participants, I could not completely relate to their university experience. The culture regarding transfer students in the university has a different feel to it in Texas versus what I experienced in California and more specifically at UCLA, as a community college transfer student. To date there is no community college transfer community on the TSU campus, no university sponsor transfer events, and definitely no visible support services specifically for Latina/o/x community college transfer students.

Further, my position within the study of evaluating the transfer receptive culture for Latina/o/x community college transfer students at a public Texas university, is that of a Mexican immigrant, working-class, Chicano, and first-generation community college transfer student, at the beginning of his fourth-year as a doctoral student. My community college experience began in the fall of 2001 at Los Angeles Community College. At the time as the first in my family to graduate high school, I did not apply to go to a four-year university like most of my peers did. Reflecting back on this experience my decision not to apply had to do with a few reasons: First, my academic experiences in high school

were shaped by both taking non-college track courses and taking courses that did not reflect my own lived experiences. This led me to be in overcrowded classrooms that were taught mainly by White teachers, where I became disengaged by the material being taught, as early as my sophomore year of high school. Further, I also recognize that at that time I lacked the necessary grades, SAT scores, and information needed to be college eligible and apply for admissions, in addition to the financial resources to be able to apply and pay for college. At the time, going to the community college was an opportunity for me to explore college and future career opportunities.

At the community college I encountered a set of experiences that prolonged my process of successfully transferring into a four-year institution. The one I remember having the most impact on me, happened my first semester at Los Angeles Community College (LACC) in a remedial English course. My former English instructor told me that my reading, writing, and critical thinking skills were not up to par with what was expected from students enrolled in her course. Her assessment of my abilities made me feel inadequate for college and I decided to stop going to school. As a result of this experience, I developed a stigma that made it difficult for me to have the confidence I needed to advance through the remedial English pipeline and become transfer eligible. After this event I took a break from school for three years and went back in 2004 after being encouraged to go back by a former friend.

Reflecting on my own community college experience I can say that my transfer experience started in Fall 2004. During this time I was attending East Los Angeles College (ELAC) and became part of the PUENTE Project, a program in California whose

mission is to increase the number of educationally underrepresented students who enroll in four-year colleges and universities, earn degrees, and return to their communities as leaders and mentors to future generations (Puente, 2016). At the time when I was at ELAC, the PUENTE Project was a one year cohort program, where participating students took one English course together for two consecutive semesters. The English course focused on exposing students to Chicana/o/x Latina/o/x literature. In addition, students met with a transfer counselor regularly to ensure that they were on track to transfer to a four-year university. Through the PUENTE Project, I was exposed to the University of California system and what it offered in pursuing higher education.

Unfortunately even though at that time, I had the institutional as well as the support from my English instructor and transfer counselor to transfer into a four-year university, I was struggling with emotional and psychological challenges due to my previous academic performance. In 2007, after not successfully completing both the transferable English and Math courses to transfer to a California 4-year university. I decided to take a break once again. I had not passed my English course for the 3rd time and if I wanted to take it, I had to take it out of the Los Angeles Community College District (LACCD). At the time I tried to enroll at Glendale Community College (GCC), but because I was trying to enroll as a new student after the semester had already started, classes were already full. Feeling discouraged by my situation, I decided not to enroll anywhere else.

A year later, in 2008, I decided to resign from my full-time position as Assistant Manager at AT&T Mobility and return to school full-time. I went back to GCC and this

time I successfully enrolled in the classes I needed. At GCC, I was able to pass English 101 the first time and Statistics after two semesters. I also had the support and femtorship of Elvia, a former community college student, who at the time was a UCLA peer mentor and worked at the GCC transfer center. My connection to Elvia was the first exposure I had to what I now identify as what Dimpal Jain, Alfred Herrera, Santiago Bernal, and Daniel Solórzano's (2011) Transfer Receptive Culture. Once I met Elvia I would schedule regular appointments with her to gain information about the transfer process and to ensure that I was on track to transfer to a University of California institution. That summer I participated in UCLA's Center for Community College Partnerships (CCCCP) Summer Transfer Experience Program (STEP). STEP is a Six-week commuter program; were students complete a regular summer session course, sponsored by UCLA's Office of Summer Sessions & Special Programs. Additionally, STEP provides students in the program with workshops to provide specific information and resources regarding the transfer process (SITE Plus, 2016).

Through Elvia's initial support and the support and resources of UCLA's CCCC, I was able to apply and be admitted to UCLA, as a Chicana/o Studies Major. Getting admitted to UCLA was a surreal experience for me, I was excited to be part of one of the most prestigious universities in the world. Once admitted I applied to participate in UCLA's Academic Advancement Program's (AAP), Transfer Summer Program (TSP) a seven-week rigorous academic residential program, which provides incoming transfer students experience with the academic demands of UCLA, an introduction to life at UCLA, and helping students feel comfortable as a UCLA student (AAP TSP, 2016). As a

result of my participation in CCCP and TSP I was able develop a positive identity as a community college transfer student, which allowed me to excel in the classroom and in navigating and negotiating the institutional and campus cultures. Furthermore, I was also able to participate in conducting undergraduate research through the UCLA Cesar E. Chavez Department of Chicano and Chicana Studies and the UCLA McNair Research Scholars program, which assisted me when I was applying to graduate school. In the Spring of 2012, I graduated Cum Laude and received Highest Departmental Honors after completing my senior thesis, and was admitted to all the graduate programs I applied to. Today, I will be starting my fourth-year in the Cultural Studies in Education doctoral program at the University of Texas at Austin.

My personal experience as a community college transfer student is relevant to my research study because even though my experiences are based in the University of California Los Angeles's (UCLA) transfer receptive culture, where approximately 40% of the undergraduate student population is made up of transfer students (UCLA Office of Analysis and Information Management, 2011, as cited in Jain, et al., 2011), it presents at least two strengths for my research study: First, as a community college transfer students I have experienced the application process to transfer from the community college to a four-year university. Second, I have experience transitioning from a community college, which is typically a smaller more personal academic and social environment, to a large research university and that can be perceived as more academically and socially intimidating.

My positionality as a researcher gives me certain power to collect the data, analyze it, and presenting the findings, through my own experiences and interpretations. In order to develop a more equal researcher/participant relationship I will share my own experiences as a Chicano community college transfer student and my motivation for conducting this type of study. In addition, I will encourage all of my participants to engage in this study at all levels including asking questions, sharing information that may have not been covered by my interview questions, and during the different stages of the analysis process so that they have an opportunity to analyze their experiences through their own perspectives.

My positionality as a Chicano with my Latina participants may limit how I can interact with them or if they would willingly speak to me about their gender-specific experiences and struggles as young females of color. In an effort to avoid making female participants feel uncomfortable, I will interview them only in places familiar to them, such as their homes, schools, or workplaces and ask them to bring a friend with them if they feel more comfortable. Finally, my positionality as the researcher also gives me the power towards the dissemination of the findings of this study seeing how academic research is generally shared with the academic community and within academic spaces often not accessed by the communities we do research with. It is my intention that at the completion of this study I will provide all of my participants with their own copy of my dissertation. Additionally, when appropriate I will encourage my participants to share their narratives in an academic or public space. It is my hope that in acknowledging my

positionality that the voices of my participants are represented in the narratives we co-construct.

The following chapter describes findings from semi-structured interviews with students and university personnel. It describes how Latina/o/x community college transfer students and university personnel culturally produced (Levinson and Holland, 1996) the pre-application transfer receptive culture (Jain et al, 2011).

CHAPTER 4

Findings: Culturally Producing the Pre-Application Transfer Receptive Culture

Semi-Structured Interviews with Students & University Personnel

This study has explored how Latina/o/x community college transfer students navigate and engage in the cultural production (Levinson and Holland, 1996) of the transfer receptive culture (Jain et al, 2011). This chapter aims to answer the following research questions by putting the students' voices in conversation with the voices of faculty, staff, and administrators: What is the perceived transfer receptive culture by Latina/o/x community college transfer students at Transfer Student University? What is the perceived transfer receptive culture for Latina/o/x community college transfer students by faculty, staff, and administrators who work with and on behalf of community college transfer students at Transfer Student University? And How do Latina/o/x/ community college transfer students navigate and engage in the cultural production of the transfer receptive culture for Latina/o/x community college transfer students at Transfer Student University? How do faculty, staff, and administrators who work with and on behalf of community college transfer students engage in the cultural production of the transfer receptive culture for Latina/o/x community college transfer students at Transfer Student University?

This chapter describes how Latina/o/x community college transfer students and personnel at Transfer Student University, navigate and engage in the cultural production of the transfer receptive culture for Latina/o/x community college transfer students at Transfer Student University. These particular findings derive from a total of 18 semi-

structured interviews: 10 with students (6 female and 4 male), and 8 with university personnel (2 faculty, 2 academic advisors, and 4 administrators). This section describes how Latina/o/x community college transfer students applied their community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005) to “culturally produce” the pre-admission transfer receptive culture, at Transfer Student University.

Semi-Structured interviews with students and university personnel were conducted using two recruitment methods, first participants were recruited from a posted recruitment flyer on the Know Events announcements page, a university wide events calendar put together by the university communications and distributed via the university’s email newsletter to students, faculty, and staff. Second, students were recruited through snowball sampling (Mertens, 2010).

This chapter combines findings from semi-structured interviews with Latina/o/x community college transfer students and university personnel at TSU to provide a comprehensive description of how Latina/o/x community college transfer students and university personnel navigate and engage in the cultural production (Levinson and Holland, 1996) of the transfer receptive culture (Jain et al, 2011) from the perspectives of students and university personnel. This chapter will be organized into the following sections: conditions Latina/o/x students confront throughout the transfer process to TSU, cultural production of the pre-application transfer process, cultural production of the transfer process, cultural production of the application process, cultural production of academic advising, cultural production of financial aid information and resources, and the summary of findings and conclusion.

Before discussing the findings, I would like to operationalize and conceptualize the use of the term “*cultural production*” within this study. As stated earlier, cultural production is a theoretical construct, which allows for the portrayal and interpretation of the way people actively confront the ideological and material conditions presented by schooling (Levinson and Holland, 1996, p.14). Additionally, cultural production provides direction for understanding how human agency operates under powerful structural constraints. Further, cultural production, lets us explore how individuals creatively occupy these structures, respond to them, and sometimes transform them (Levinson and Holland, 1996). In this study, I use “*cultural production*” to describe how Latina/o/x community college transfer students applied their community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005), against all perceived and real gatekeepers and or institutionalized mechanisms, to engage in gaining the information and resources to meet their specific needs and goals, through the transfer process and beyond.

Further, to highlight how Latina/o/x community college transfer students “culturally produced” (Levinson and Holland, 1996) the transfer receptive culture (Jain et al., 2011) I use Tara Yosso’s (2005) CCW model, describes the array of knowledge, skills, abilities and contacts possessed and utilized by Communities of Color to survive and resist macro and micro-forms of oppression (p.77). The CCW model is made up of six cultural capitals aspirational, linguistic, familial, social, navigational, and resistant capitals, they are defined below:

1. Aspirational capital refers to the ability to maintain hopes and dreams for the future, even in

the face of real and perceived barriers.

2. Linguistic capital includes the intellectual and social skills attained through communication experiences in more than one language and/or style.
3. Familial capital refers to those cultural knowledges nurtured among familia (kin) that carry a sense of community history, memory and cultural intuition
4. Social capital can be understood as networks of people and community resources.
5. Navigational capital refers to skills of maneuvering through social institutions.
6. Resistant capital refers those knowledges and skills fostered through oppositional behavior that challenges inequality (pgs, 77-80).

In this study, participants relied on their aspirational, familial, navigational, and social capitals, to navigate and engage in the “cultural production” (Levinson and Holland, 1996) of the transfer receptive culture (Jain et al., 2011) at TSU. In the following section, I discuss the ideological, material, and structural conditions, Latina/o/x community college transfer students confronted throughout the transfer process from their perspective community colleges to TSU.

Ideological, Material, and Powerful Structural Conditions Latina/o/x Students Confront throughout the Transfer Process to Transfer Student University

Taking into account the lived experiences of all of the Latina/o/x students who participated in this study, these were the ideological, material, and structural conditions that students had to navigate and engaged with during the transfer process to TSU.

Ideological Conditions

A few students in this study described coming to transfer orientation and receiving messages from several university representatives that TSU was at a higher academic level than the community colleges they transferred from and that as community college transfer students, they were less academically prepared to succeed at TSU. These types of messages have several implications for current and future community college transfer students. First, these messages have the potential to become the institutional discourse describing community college transfer students, thereby influencing the institutional practices within this population of students.

Second, these messages are dismissive of the lived experiences including the sets of skills and knowledges (Yosso, 2005) community college transfer students bring with them to the university. Finally, these messages have the ability to create unnecessary physical, psychological, and emotional distress amongst first-year community college transfer students at TSU.

Material Conditions

During the pre-application and post-admissions process, students confronted a limited amount of culturally responsive direct outreach from TSU. These conditions, placed most of the responsibility to access relevant and critical information and resources to meet their specific needs on students themselves. Once enrolled students also confronted a limited amount of culturally responsive academic, social, and emotional support, to meet their specific needs and goals, as Latina/o/x community college transfer students. The implications from these culturally unresponsive practices are that they may

delay, interrupt, or discourage Latina/o/x community college students from transferring to TSU.

Powerful Structural Conditions

As stated earlier, there is a unique set of admissions practices that contribute to the powerful structural conditions that directly impact the number of Latina/o/x community college students who may eventually transfer to TSU. First, since 1998, the top 10% law, guaranteed admission to all Texas seniors who graduate in the top ten percent of their class. (Niu, Tienda, & Cortes, 2006). Additionally, since the spring of 2009, the 81st legislation session made changes to the automatic admission law at Transfer Student University. Under the new law (SB 175), students applying for admissions beginning with the summer 2011 and forward would be impacted. Currently to be offered automatic admissions for the summer/fall 2018 and Spring 2019, students must be in the top 7% of their class (See Footnote¹⁶).

Second, beginning with the Fall/Summer 2001 admissions, TSU set in place the Freshmen Transfer Program (FTP) (See Footnote¹⁷) FTP expanded the admission options available to first-year applicants to TSU, by allowing them to begin their post-secondary education at another TSU system university. Once the student fulfills the FTP requirements as a freshman, he or she can transfer to TSU to complete their

¹⁶ For the sake of anonymity of the institution, the study retracts this source. For a copy of this and others sources retracted in this study please contact the author.

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undergraduate degree (See Footnote¹⁸). Additionally, in 2014 TSU partnered with Transfer Community College (pseudonym) and launched a co-enrollment program for incoming first-year students. Freshmen Transfer Program through Co-Enrollment (FTPCE) was developed for students who are Texas residents and are eligible for automatic admission under the state's top 10 percent law, but who do not qualify under the new automatic admission policy for TSU (See Footnote¹⁹). Students who participate in FTPCE have two years to complete the core curriculum and maintain a 2.5 cumulative grade point average in order to continue with their bachelor's degree at TSU. Implications from these admission practices, suggest that TSU is giving less priority to students who traditionally attend the community college in order to transfer to a four-year university like TSU.

Given the ideological, material, and structural conditions described above students who participated in this study, responded to these conditions according to their individual interactions and experiences with the university and according to their own specific needs and goals as Latina/o/x community college transfer students. Additionally, there were two ways students used their CCW (Yosso, 2005) to confront these conditions. First, students acted individually and used their CCW, to gain the information and resources they needed in order to meet their specific needs. Second, students engaged others in “culturally producing” (Levinson and Holland, 1996) the information and

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resources they needed to meet their specific needs and goals, as Latina/o/x community college transfer students. In the following section, I will discuss how Latina/o/x community college transfer students culturally produced (Levinson and Holland, 1996) the pre-application transfer receptive culture (Jain et al., 2011). Each section begins with examples of how students used their CCW to gain the information and resources they needed in order to meet their specific needs. These examples are followed, by ways in which students collaborated with others in “culturally producing” (Levinson and Holland, 1996) the information and resources they needed to meet their specific needs and goals, as Latina/o/x community college transfer students.

Cultural Production of the Pre-Application Transfer Receptive Culture

Outreach by TSU

From the perspective of students, the majority of students who participated in this study relied on themselves, friends, or personnel at their community college or at the university, to gain information and resources on how to transfer from their respective community college to Transfer Student University. This was mainly due to a limited amount of direct outreach done by TSU at the student’s community college campuses. When students were asked if a TSU representative was available to meet with them on their community college campus or if anyone from TSU participated in any transfer related events or activities, the majority of students responded “no”. Only Mayté and Cruz, describe having an interaction with a representative from TSU. Mayté, for example, describes seeing a TSU representative during her last semester at the community college

during a college fair she co-organized with other student leaders. Mayté, describes her experience as:

Despues de haber asistido 6 años al colegio comunitario no habia visto la Universidad de TSU venir. Hasta mi ultimo semestre, cuando ya estaba apunto de graduarme. Fue cuando habia una oportunidad de college fair. Y ahi vinieron A&M, y Baylor, TSU, entre otras escuelas. Y recuerdo que ese dia yo estaba vestida profesionalmente y yo era una de las vise-presidentas de student government, que estaba ayudando en ese college fair que habia. Y de repente mi consejera me dice, voltea a tu mano izquierda, voltea Mayté. Y le dije, "por qué, qué pasa" mira, mira, y volteo, y se me salen las lagrimas. Lo puedo recordar como si fuera ayer. Y estaba TSU, todos los colores, anaranjados, blancos, y yo "Oh my god, ahí está TSU, ahí está TSU" Y me dice mi consejera, Mayté ve preguntales algo. Pero estaba temblando de miedo, esto no sabía como decirles, pero mi mentora me dice, no estás toda profesional, tú puedes, ve y habla con ellos. Entonces, estaba Mr. David si, estaba de enfrente, y me acerque a su mesa y le dije, lo salude este, Mr. David, gracias por venir a nuestra college fair. Solo le quería preguntatar que si no se le ofrece agua, comida, o algo? Pero yo espornado que me dijiera, o estas interesada en TSU o ya aplicaste pero no. Me dijo si claro, una agua comida esta bien. (Mayté, CCTS).

After having attended community colleges for 6 years, I had not seen the University of TSU come. Until my last semester, when I was about to graduate. It was when there was a chance to college fair. And there came A & M, and Baylor, TSU, among other schools. And I remember that on that day I was dressed professionally and I was one of the vise-presidents of student government, who was helping in that college fair there was. And suddenly my counselor said, turn to your left, turn Mayté. And I said, "why what happened" look, look, and I turned around, and my tears come out. I can remember it as if it were yesterday. And I was TSU, all colors, orange, white, and I "Oh my god, there's TSU, there's TSU " And my counselor tells me, Mayté sees you ask something. But I was shaking with fear, I did not know how to tell them, but my mentor tells me, you are not all professional, you can, go and talk to them. Then, there was Mr. David, he was in front of me, and I went to his table and said, "Hi, Mr. David, thank you for coming to our college fair. I just wanted to ask you if you are not offered water, food, or something? But I expected you to tell me, or are you interested in TSU or have you applied but not. He said yes, of course, a water meal is fine. (Mayté, CCTS).

From Mayté's description of her experience with TSU, two things stood out; first, TSU's absence from Mayté's community college for 6-years reflects TSU's lack of commitment

in supporting community college students like Mayté, in the transfer process. One of the two elements of the transfer receptive culture model during the pre-transfer process is that a four-year university support the community college mission of transferring by providing outreach and resources to meet the specific needs of community college transfer students (Jain et al., 2011). An absence from TSU at the community college and the lack of outreach, limits students like Mayté, access to information and resources that can support them in the transfer process. This TSU absence places the responsibility on students like Mayté to gain access to and make sense of the information needed to become eligible to transfer, apply, and enroll, at the four-year university. This lack of guidance from TSU may delay, interrupt, or discourage community college students from transferring to a four-year university.

Second, seeing Mayté's emotional reaction to TSU being present during the college fair she co-organized and her interaction with Mr. David, brings up two things; first, the idea that TSU has some type of social, cultural, and symbolic capital amongst Latina/o/x community college students. The ways students described TSU when our conversations started at the beginning of this project, place a significant amount of power and value on TSU as a university in Texas. This power and value that students placed on TSU, is also corroborated by Mr. David's response to Mayté's greeting and her offering him water and food. In her interaction Mayté was being a good host and "*bien educada*" or "well educated," the belief that when a guest comes into your house, you need to make sure that they are taken care of (Delgado-Gaitan, 2004). Mayté represented this by making sure she was dressed professionally and by greeting Mr. David and thanking him

for coming to her college fair, followed by her offering him water and food. During her description of the interaction, Mayté said that she was expecting Mr. David to reply to her greeting and offering of food by asking her if she was interested in TSU and if she had applied yet. He didn't and instead continued by accepting the water and food. This interaction could be interpreted as indifference by Mr. David as a representative of the university where Mayté was interested in transferring to. Mr. David could have used this first interaction as an opportunity to demonstrate a transfer receptive culture, by asking Mayté if she had an interest in applying to transfer to TSU. Later on, Mayté relied on the relationship she established with Mr. David at this event, to gain the financial aid information and resources she needed during her transition and beyond.

Cruz also described his interaction with a TSU representative at his community college during a tabling event:

“No, no mas una vez hubo mesas de muchas universidades ahí en el colegio y ahí estaba la de [TSU]. Fue a la primera mesa que fui, osea que no iba muy preparado con preguntas, cuando fui, no llegué con preguntas buenas para preguntar y pues como no supe preguntar mas o menos, no mas pregunté una me acuerdo, pregunté una y no supe preguntarla, la señora no supo responderme y, pero no supo tampoco no me quiso, como que no supo, no quiso ayudarme no, no me dio, como hay personas que le ayudan con algo aunque no le pregunten todavía les da información, la persona no me dio información” (Cruz, CCTS)

No, no more once there were tables of many universities there in the school and there was the one of [TSU]. It was at the first table I went, I mean I was not very prepared with questions, when I went, I did not come with good questions to ask and since I did not know how to ask more or less, no more ask one I remember, ask one and I did not know how to ask, the lady did not know how to answer and, but she did not know either she did not want me, like she did not know, she did not want to help me, she did not give me, as there are people who help her with something He gave me information (Cruz, CCTS).

From Cruz's interaction with the representative from TSU, we can infer two things; first, that as a Mexican immigrant, first-generation college student, whose first language is Spanish, Cruz begins by taking responsibility for the interaction by justifying the outcome. He does that by saying that he wasn't prepared with good questions when he approached the TSU representative and that he didn't know how to ask "good" questions, but that the TSU representative was not responsive towards him. He added that she did not want to help him even though when students generally approach university representatives they usually engage students without students having to necessarily ask any questions.

Cruz's experience shows again what could be interpreted as indifference or unreceptiveness on the part of a TSU representative. Cruz appropriately observed that generally when students approach university representatives, they tend to be more receptive to engaging students. In a follow up conversation Cruz shared that he remembered asking the TSU representative about information on how to become transfer eligible to apply to TSU. When I asked Cruz about how her response made him feel, he shared:

me sentí como si me vieran como si como que no iba, para que gastaban su tiempo en mi, si era mas probable, mas probable que no iba a llegar a que me aceptaran no valiera la pena gastar su tiempo en mi por eso no me respondieron no me dieron la información" (Cruz, CCTS).

I felt as if they saw me as if I was not going, so they spent their time on me, if it was more likely, more likely that I would not get to be accepted not worth spending their time on me so I did not they answered they did not give me the information (Cruz, CCTS).

Cruz's response reflects his interpretation of how he felt TSU perceived him as a prospective community college transfer student, a student that was not worth their time. A student that was not worth having his question answered, or that was not worth giving information to. And certainly one that was not worth being admitted to an university like TSU.

Cruz shared that asking the TSU representative a question made him feel that his question was "dumb." He described this as:

...pos de que no, no mas no, no mas no me dieron la información y luego me hizo sentir que mi pregunta era mensa no tenía mucho sentido y si, y como le digo no me dio información de ella misma aunque no había otros estudiantes esperando ni nada, yo era el único, no mas no si como que no supo mucha información
(Cruz, CCTS)

"No, no, no, no, they did not give me the information and then she made me feel that my question was dumb, it did not make much sense and yes, and as I said, she did not give me information about herself even though there were no other students waiting for nothing, I was the only one, no more no if I did not know much information (Cruz, CCTS).

Instead of Cruz leaving the table with information and hopefully some resources that would support him transferring to TSU, Cruz left feeling "dumb," with a weak connection to TSU, and a sense that TSU did not want him to transfer to their school. From a TRC framework (Jain et al, 2011), the type of outreach TSU did with Cruz, failed in three main ways: first, TSU failed to acknowledged him as a person. This was evident when the TSU representative did not acknowledge Cruz when he approached the table to ask a question. Second, even if the TSU represntative did not understand his question, she could have asked him to clarify or at a minimum could have provided him with

information and resources for Cruz to do some additional research on his own. Finally, the TSU representative failed to create a sense of belonging for Cruz. She failed to let Cruz know that students like him are welcomed and belong at TSU and universities like it.

Given that many of the Latina/o/x community college transfer students in this study experienced a limited amount of direct outreach by TSU, I asked key TSU administrators and staff how their respective offices or departments engage aspiring Latina/o/x community college transfer students via outreach. From the responses I received my perception of TSU's commitment to supporting Latina/o/x community college students transferring to TSU is that it is inconsistent across the university. For example, when I interviewed Mike, the director of transfer admissions and asked him about how TSU was outreaching to aspiring Latina/o/x community college transfer students at their community college campuses, he said:

We've tried to be careful in terms of the outreach efforts, one because we don't get a lot of numbers in the two-year college environment, we may get 1 or 2 in that type of thing at school. So, you know return on the dollar is not a good thing down there. The other part of it is, that TCC (pseudonym) is our major feeder, half of the students that come to us from two-year colleges come from TCC, and so we've done a lot with TCC, we have not done a lot with all the other colleges (Mike, University Personnel).

From Mike's response it seems that since TSU receives a low number of applications from community college students outside of TCC, then TSU may be hesitant in spending their resources on doing direct outreach to aspiring community college transfer students outside of TCC, their major feeder. This may impact the number of aspiring Latina/o/x community college transfer students that TSU may be able to reach and serve.

From a TRC model the behavior by TSU representatives and some administrators in Mayté's and Cruz's experiences demonstrate that TSU is not directly outreaching to aspiring Latina/o/x community college students and not developing their sense of belonging to TSU; therefore, supporting the community college mission of transfer in a limited capacity within the community colleges, outside the TCC system. (Jain et al., 2011). Additionally, Mike revealed that they have a strong partnership with TCC, the local community college system, which provides TSU with half of the students who transfer from the community college. This may be as a result of the Freshmen Transfer Program through Co-Enrollment (FTPCE). A partnership between TSU and TCC that began in the 2012-2013 academic year, which was developed for students who are Texas residents and are eligible for automatic admission under the state's top 10 percent law, but who do not qualify under the new automatic admission policy for TSU (See Footnote²⁰). Students who participate in FTPCE have two years to complete the core curriculum and maintain a 2.5 cumulative grade point average in order to continue with their bachelor's degree at TSU. When I asked Mike to clarify if a high number of students transferring from TCC had to do with the FTPCE program he never responded to my inquiry.

Students Reaching Out to TSU

Despite having limited access to direct outreach by TSU, including gaining information and resources about transferring to TSU, several of the Latinx students in this study used their navigational capital (Yosso, 2005) to reach out to the university to make

²⁰ For the sake of anonymity of the institution, the study retracts this source. For a copy of this and others sources retracted in this study please contact the author.

up for the limited amount of direct outreach by TSU. This provided them with information and resources that increased their opportunity to be admitted and transfer to TSU. Students engaged in the process of gaining the information and resources by calling TSU's admissions office or by going directly to TSU's admissions office themselves to speak with someone in person. Students experienced different outcomes from these self-directed initiatives. For example, before Lucía and Mayté applied to transfer to TSU, they used their navigational capital (Yosso, 2005) and called the admissions office to gain more information about the transfer process. Lucía shared that she called the admissions office at TSU, to ask specific questions she had regarding courses she was taking at her community college. Lucía described her experience as:

I spoke to admissions and the question that I was asking was, should I take these courses in order to be qualified enough to be admitted to TSU? And I remember the specific course was psychology and the person said: "well you know I am not able to tell you anything or I cannot tell you anything because you're not a TSU student so first you need to apply, be accepted, and then we'll analyze your courses" (Lucía, CCTS).

Lucía applied her navigational capital (Yosso, 2005) by directly contacting the admissions office at TSU and asking if the psychology course she was inquiring about would make her eligible for transfer admissions at TSU. Lucía's experience, however, brings up a valid concern for community college students who may not have direct access to information and resources that address particular questions about specific courses like psychology that may or may not be transferable to TSU. Having this type of critical information makes students like Lucía more competitive in the transfer admissions process. From a TRC perspective, the interaction between Lucía and the admissions

representative at TSU, showed a lack of commitment by TSU towards the community college transfer mission (Jain et al., 2011) by refusing to provide Lucía with the information she needed about a course that could have potentially impacted her transfer admissions outcome. In this case, one could infer that TSU is working as a gatekeeper of critical information during the transfer process. Furthermore, from Lucía's and Mayté's experiences there is this perception by the admissions staff that Latina/o/x community college students calling in with questions regarding the transfer process to TSU are somehow not worthy of having this information because they are not officially "TSU students".

Mayté described having a similar experience when she was trying to get support via phone on how to navigate the TSU transfer admissions website from admissions personnel:

Si, el proceso se me hizo muy difícil, porque realmente no sabía mucho como navegar la página. Entonces a veces me comunicaba con el departamento de admisiones, pero a veces no me daban mucha ayuda [...] ellos decían, no es que no te podemos dar como una ayuda hasta que no estes aceptada. Pero yo creo que también tenía que ver con el tipo de lenguaje, tal vez mi inglés no era muy bueno para desenvolverme. Tal vez no podía preguntar las preguntas correctamente (Mayté, CCTS)

Yes, the process was very difficult for me because I really did not know how to navigate the page. So sometimes I contacted the admissions department, but sometimes they did not give me much help [...] they said, no, we cannot give you as a help until you are accepted. But I think that it also had to do with the type of language, maybe my English was not very good to develop. Maybe I could not ask the questions correctly (Mayté, CCTS).

Despite Mayté experiencing some challenges in navigating the transfer admissions website, she used her navigational capital (Yosso, 2005) by calling the admissions office

at TSU and asking them questions about the website. This is another good example of how a university like TSU, can be a gatekeeper for students like Mayté. Mayté, had technical questions on how to navigate TSU's transfer admissions website to be able to apply as a community college student. She was not asking about anything related to transfer admissions requirements and was still unable to get the information she needed based on her status as a community college student. Additionally, this interaction caused Mayté to place blame on herself and not on the university as a result of how she perceived asking the questions. This may have been attributed to Mayté's perception of her English speaking abilities something she brought up a few times during our conversations, specifically when she described going to seek academic support and having to communicate with university personnel.

On the other hand, Alejandra a student who used her navigational capital (Yosso, 2005) to personally visit TSU to gain information about transferring had a more positive experience. Alejandra shared that if she wanted to find out about TSU, she needed to go to TSU, she described her experience saying,

Yeah, like when I was at TCC, I have to come here and ask about like, what is the process for me to transfer. [...] First, I talked with my advisor at TCC and then she told me I need to come here and when I came here, I think is the undergrad office for international students, they gave all the information. Like what classes do I need to take in order to transfer to TSU (Alejandra, CCTS)

Alejandra used her navigational capital (Yosso,2005) to navigate both the community college and the university system to gain the information she needed in order to transfer to TSU, first by going to see her advisor at TCC and then by going to TSU and visiting the undergraduate office for international students. However, looking at Alejandra's

experience using the TRC model, we see that TSU was unsuccessful at supporting TCC's mission of transfer (Jain et al., 2011) because TSU did not take the time to properly train and equip Alejandra's advisor on the transfer process for international community college students. Even though there seems to be a strong partnership between TSU and TCC based on several accounts made by TSU personnel, this is an example of how disconnected outreach and recruitment efforts may be from the rest of the university community, in this case the international office. Perhaps if TSU had taken a more active approach in their outreach efforts Alejandra would not have to physically go to the university for information that should have been made available to her at the community college.

TSU Outreach

Even though the majority of the students in this study did not experience direct outreach by TSU while they were enrolled at their community college, there were some departments at TSU that conducted some type of outreach within the local community college system. For example, Citlali, Associate Director for New Student Services and Jay, Senior Academic Program Coordinator of the Transfer Year Experience Program at TSU, shared that their respective offices attend a transfer event co-hosted by the local community college and TSU. Citlali, who plans and coordinates the year-round transfer orientation for incoming transfer students at TSU, described how her office outreaches to Latinas/os/xs:

In terms of outreach to Latinos in community college – our office attends the TCC to TSU Marketplace event - where TSU Academic Advisors and some TSU offices go to TCC Tierra Alta Campus (pseudonym) to speak with prospective

students interested in transferring to TSU. Our table isn't as popular as other tables with advisors, but we are still there to answer common questions about TSU, inform them about orientation, and other resources at TSU (Citlali, University Personnel).

From the perspective of a TRC model, it seems that Citlali's and the New Student Services office, is generally practicing a transfer receptive culture for community college transfer students. However, there are at least three critical challenges to conducting this type of outreach.

First, this event is specifically for students who attend community colleges within the TCC system, the local community college. Citlali, never mentioned any type of outreach her or her staff do with other Texas community colleges. This is important because only two of the ten Latina/o/x students who participated in this study transferred from a community college within the TCC system. Second, this event is a one day only event, making it challenging for some students that may have other roles and responsibilities to attend the one-day event. Also, the specific TCC campus where this event takes place may not be accessible to students that live in parts of the city that are further out and or who may not have reliable transportation. Third, Citlali did not provide any type of information that would show evidence of how the NSS office is specifically engaging aspiring Latina/o/x community college transfer students, to help them meet their transfer needs and goals.

Jay also described this event:

We host a TCC to TSU Marketplace where we bring academic advisors from each of the colleges and schools, admissions reps, and staff from support programs at TSU to an TCC campus to meet with students. I would say that we meet with a couple hundred students at this event. Prior to their orientation session, we run

core curriculum audits for all admitted transfer students and direct them to self-guided academic resources, like transfer equivalency tables (Jay, University Personnel).

At the surface level the Transfer Year Experience Program (TYEP) office at TSU is practicing a TRC by outreaching to prospective and recently admitted students. But neither the NSS or the TYEP offices are doing anything specific to address the needs of aspiring Latina/o/x community college transfer students. There are no indications from what Citlali or Jay shared that describe any meaningful ways that NSS and TYEP at TSU is actively engaging aspiring Latina/o/x community college transfer students. This includes meeting their specific needs, goals, or developing a sense of belonging at TSU.

In addition, Ericka, associate academic advisor in the College of Education (COE) at TSU, described the outreach she began doing on behalf of the college as a graduate assistant at the local community college:

One of the things that we do or at least that I used to do as a graduate assistant and our current graduate assistants have continued doing, in the student success and recruitment area, is we pop into specific classes, that are elementary education classes and we talk about TSU. We talk about the kind of coursework you do and definitely handout cards that you can contact us if you have any questions. So that's kind of one of the first steps. We also see prospective students, so and I think, at least I try to be flexible if you need a phone meeting, even if you can't come in and you can just do email, that's fine by me. So, I think that's one of the things like trying to keep those lines of communication open (Ericka, University Personnel).

Ericka's description of how the college of education engages community college students provides a good perspective of good TRC practices towards aspiring Latina/o/x community college transfer students. The fact that graduate students representing the college of education at TSU go into the classroom and directly outreach to students is an

effective way to reach out to more Latina/o/x community college students. This approach can be effective because students get to learn about TSU as an institution, about the academic expectations particular to elementary education, they have a person they can contact for specific questions, and most importantly since they are being reached out to, this sends the message that TSU wants them to apply and transfer to their institution. Ericka's positive and flexible disposition to meeting with prospective transfer students and communicating with them via phone or email provides a strong example of practicing a TRC.

On the other hand, Craig who is a senior academic advisor in the College of Liberal Arts (COLA), shared a different perspective on outreach, sharing that in general COLA does not do direct outreach to Latina/o/x community college students. He shared, "admissions deals with transfer eligibility and the enrollment part, we just work with students once they are here. There is no specific program/outreach to my knowledge targeted at Latino community college students. It just happens on a department by department basis" (Craig, University Personnel). Craig's comment confirms both the deprioritizing that COLA at TSU has towards actively recruiting aspiring Latina/o/x community college transfer students and the disconnect between COLA and TSU transfer admissions and other offices on campus and their initiatives and efforts to increase the number of Latina/o/x community college students who transfer to TSU. This is evident by seeing how COLA does not participate or may not be aware of the TCC to TSU Marketplace event, where TSU outreaches to aspiring community college transfer students.

In general, the perspectives provided by Citlali, Jay, Ericka and Craig, provide us a glimpse of the full range and depth of what TSU is doing to practice a TRC with aspiring Latina/o/x community college transfer students during the pre-transfer admissions process. We can draw two broad implications from their responses: first, that the pre-admissions TRC for Latina/o/x community college transfer students at TSU is limited. Both Citlali and Jay described their offices' participation in the TCC to TSU Marketplace event and how they provided and adapted their outreach efforts to meet the specific needs of aspiring Latina/o/x community college transfer students. Second, although there is some outreach being done by TSU at the community colleges, the outreach efforts do not seem to be shared by TSU as an institution. Instead it seems that each office or department has their own outreach program.

Cultural Production of the Transfer Process

In addition to gaining information regarding the admission transfer process, Latina/o/x community college students need specific information and resources in order to successfully become eligible to apply, enroll, and graduate with a bachelor's degree from a four-year institution. These needs include but are not limited to, gaining adequate transfer information, financial aid information, career and academic advice as first-generation college students, receiving conflicting information about the transfer process, and an overall lack of institutional commitment to implement and fulfill the transfer function by their community college (Ornelas and Solórzano, 2004). When I asked the students in this study if they were provided with resources to support them transferring to TSU such as information about becoming transfer eligible, academic advising to ensure

they took the appropriate transferable coursework, and financial aid or scholarship opportunities for Latina/o/x community college students, they all said no. The students in this study relied on their aspirational, navigational, and social capitals, at both their community college and TSU, to “culturally produce” (Levinson and Holland, 1996) the pre-application transfer receptive culture in order to become transfer eligible, apply, and gain transfer admissions to Transfer Student University.

Transfer requirements vary by institution and by the department/program community college students applying to. Students aspiring to transfer to Transfer Student University need to have completed 30 semester hours of transferable coursework, an online application through Apply Texas, an application fee of \$75 (\$90 for international applicants), two essays, college transcripts, high school transcripts, resume, major specific pre-requisites, letters of recommendation, English proficiency test scores (for international students), resident card (only if applicable), and a residency affidavit (See Footnote²¹). To “culturally produce” (Levinson and Holland, 1996) the direct outreach necessary to learn more about the transfer process from their community college to TSU, participants tapped into their aspirational, navigational, and social capitals (Yosso, 2005). For example, Cruz used his aspirational, navigational and social capitals (Yosso, 2005), to find out what were the top universities for his major in Texas and to determine what were the transfer requirements to apply to TSU as a Chemical Engineer major. He described learning about the transfer requirements by going online and using Google, Cruz says,

²¹ For the sake of anonymity of the institution, the study retracts this source. For a copy of this and others sources retracted in this study please contact the author.

Ah, pos se me hace que nomás Google. Google a ver cuales son las mejores y ya cuando miré que tenía buenos grados y mi counselor y mi jefe me decían que tenía una chanza de meterme a una escuela buena so empecé a research nomás en Google, a ver cuáles eran las mejores universidades aquí en Tejas, y pos ahí estaba este TSU (Cruz, CCTS)

Ah, well, it just makes me google. Google to see which are the best and when I saw that I had good grades and my counselor and my boss told me that I had a joke about getting into a school Good so I started research nomas on google, to see which were the best universities here in Texas, and there was this TSU (Cruz, CCTS)

Cruz's experience shows how despite being dismissed by the TSU representative during the college fair and not gaining the information he needed in order to apply to transfer to TSU, Cruz used his aspirational capital (Yosso, 2005) to make sure he was applying to the top Engineering programs in Texas. Applying to the top engineering program in Texas, was supported by Cruz's social capital (Yosso, 2005), that at the time was made up of his counselor and boss and their encouragement to find and apply to the top universities. Finally, he applied his navigational capital (Yosso, 2005) to navigate through the web and find the information he needed in order to determine what were the top universities for his major in Texas and to apply as a community college transfer student. Navigating this part of the transfer application process through Google is probably the easiest way to do it, since Cruz may have received access to an infinite amount of information within seconds. At the same time, using Google to gain this information was also the less efficient thing to do at this point in the transfer process, seeing how there are probably thousands of websites along with the official university one's, that provide information about applying to TSU as a community college transfer student. One challenge that Cruz undertook with using Google to gain this information

was to make sure he found relevant and accurate information that met his specific needs and goals.

Vanessa applied a combination of her navigational and social capitals (Yosso, 2005) to gain the information she needed about the transfer requirements to transfer into the college of education at TSU as a Bilingual Education major. Vanessa shared that:

The community college which I attended in Waco had an area in the advisors' office that had various pamphlets and resources with information on transferring. I gathered a few which I found interesting and did small research on those universities independently. In addition, I had a small, casual conversation with my field supervisor when I worked with CIS about my plans and how I was unsure of where I would transfer. She mentioned to me that she has heard that TSU has a great education program. I did a bit of research on the College of Education here at TSU and felt good about it. The website provided clear instructions on the steps I needed to take to apply, and I was able to follow them (Vanessa, CCTS)

Vanessa described using her navigational capital (Yosso,2005) to get the information she needed on transferring, by first, collecting some of the printed literature she had access to through her advisor's office at her community college. Second, she applied her navigational capital (Yosso,2005) to continue doing some extended independent research on the universities she was interested in applying to transfer to. Additionally, she described using her social capital (Yosso,2005), when she had the conversation with her former CIS supervisor, who reinforced Vanessa's decision to apply to transfer to TSU when she mentioned that she had heard that TSU had a great education program, thereby encouraging Vanessa to apply.

Ismael, also relied on his navigational and social capital (Yosso,2005) to gain the information he needed in order to learn about the transfer requirements as an Economics major.

He described his experience gaining this information as, “I either reached out to people that I knew had gone to TSU or just looked up all throughout the website and there was like other forums or blogs about like other people’s transfer experience” (Ismael, CCTS). Ismael described using his social capital (Yosso,2005) by reaching out to a network of students who he knew had attended TSU. Ismael also described using his navigational capital (Yosso,2005) to navigate the web and gain information that was on the university’s website and blogs where he learned about other students transfer experiences.

The cultural production of the transfer process for Larina/o/x transfer students describes students collaborating with people inside and outside of the university to learn about how to transfer to TSU. These collaborations describe two types of “cultural production” that was produced within this process. First through their social networks participants received encouragement and re-assurance that they should consider transferring to an institution like TSU.

For example, Cruz began considering TSU after he received encouragement from his counselor and boss, when they realized that he had a strong academic record. Their encouragement led Cruz to begin learning about the transfer process to TSU. Similarly, Vanessa received encouragement and re-assurance about applying to the teaching education program at TSU, from one of her former supervisors. As a result, Vanessa conducted additional research on the program and felt good about her decision to apply to transfer into the program, The second type of “cultural production” that was created through this process was gaining information about how to transfer to TSU. Ismael for

example, relied on people he knew had gone to TSU in order to learn how to transfer to TSU. One of the highlights of these examples is that the “cultural production” of the transfer receptive culture is not just about producing information and resources, but it is also about producing the emotional aspect of this process. In this case participants social networks produced the encouragement and re-assurance students needed in order to move on to learn about the transfer process to TSU.

Cultural Production Application Process

To learn about the application for transfer admissions at TSU students relied on their previous knowledge with filling out college applications and others used their social capital (Yosso, 2005) to “culturally produce” (Levinson and Holland, 1996) the application process. This meant that students relied on friends or people they knew who had already applied to transfer or had already transferred to TSU, to figure out how to apply to TSU. Lucía for example, applied previous knowledge she developed on applying to college by supporting other students in filling out their college application. She said, “I feel that I have helped other students fill out their application and I kind of had an idea of what is required and what is necessary and what is professionalism and what a school would be happy to see in an application. I guess that helped me” (Lucía, CCTS). Lucía’s response shows confidence in the skills and knowledge she has gained over the years after supporting other students through the college application process. It also demonstrates that Lucía is aware that there are two aspects of the application that reviewers pay attention to. First, reviewers look at content, making sure that all of the students’ information, grades, and supplementary documents are turned in. Second,

reviewers look at the technical aspects of the application. For example, if students know how to organize and write a resume and if the students' recommenders know how to organize and write letters of recommendation.

On the other hand, Daniel, Ismael, and Mayté, applied their social capital (Yosso, 2005) to gain the information and resources about the application process that they needed in order to apply to transfer to TSU. Daniel, described gaining the information about applying to TSU through his social capital (Yosso, 2005) by texting with one of his friends who had transferred to TSU a year before he did. He described his experience:

Yeah, who came to TSU? He was a year ahead of me and he was also at Tarrant County College. So, he transferred a year before me and he would text me about somethings, just like some tips, general tips on how to apply and when to apply, and things like that. (Daniel, CCTS).

Daniel's experience highlights the significance social relationships and social networks can have in the transfer process. Daniel benefited from his friendship by getting access to the technical aspects of the application process through the use to technology via text messaging. The seemingly small but critical pieces of information that only a person who has already gone through the process knows were vitally important to Daniel because his friend became a great resource for him. His friend was a current student at the time that Daniel applied for transfer admissions. This provided Daniel with accurate and reliable information that he was able to use during his application process.

Similarly, Ismael used his social capital (Yosso, 2005) in the form of a connection he was able to make at a summer event that brings together male student leaders of color from Independent School Districts (ISD's), community colleges, and four-year

universities, across the state of Texas. He described his connection with Marco, a Latino male community college transfer student he met at the event:

It was this guy that I met. Actually, I think he was in one of the forums for the Project MALES summit that I met whenever I was at the community college. So, I reached out to him, it was, I think he's name was Marco or I forgot his name. But yeah, I remember I connected with him on Facebook and I just reached out to him. He told me about the top 10% like in high school it's still get automatic admission even if you are in community college. [...] So that really like, took away a lot of stress, 'cause I was like okay well, I just have to do my essays and everything. I don't have to stress about it (Ismael, CCTS).

Like Daniel, Ismael also benefited from the technical information about applying to TSU he was able to get from Marco, who he met at the leadership event. As a high school student Ismael was in the top 10% of his graduating class. This gave him automatic admissions into TSU as a freshman but due to personal circumstances at the time, he decided to enroll at the community college. Since Ismael qualified for automatic admissions under the top 10% law (See Footnote²²), he enrolled in a Texas community college after graduating high school, completed the core curriculum, earned a cumulative GPA of a 2.5, and applied for transfer admissions to a term within four academic years after graduating from high school (See Footnote²³). Also, since Ismael did not have access to direct outreach by anyone from TSU, he probably wouldn't have known about this technicality within the transfer application process to TSU. Getting this information from Marco not only made transferring to TSU more realistic for Ismael but as he mentioned in his response, it also relieved him of the stress he was experiencing.

²² For the sake of anonymity of the institution, the study retracts this source. For a copy of this and others sources retracted in this study please contact the author.

²³ For the sake of anonymity of the institution, the study retracts this source. For a copy of this and others sources retracted in this study please contact the author.

Finally, Mayté relied on her social capital (Yosso, 2005) through a mentor and a network of friends who had experienced applying to other Texas universities. Mayté described her experience saying:

En eso un día Michael y Saúl me dijeron que no que yo tenía que ir a la Universidad, porque ellos decían que ellos ya habían aplicado. Yo les digo, pero cómo aplicaron, no pos necesitamos que agarrar transcripts, y yo les digo, pos cómo agarraste tu transcripts, no pos fui aquí al colegio comunitario. Y ya me fui informando, con esos dos amigos y con mi mentora Elizabeth. Este mi amigo Saúl me ayudó un poquito a como navegar la página de la Universidad, me metí, me fui al lado de admisiones, ahí estaba leyendo en inglés, what to do as incoming freshman to the university, what to do as a transfer student to the university. Entonces yo hice un click en transfers y pues ahí fue como yo me iba informando acerca, de cuáles eran los requisitos de la Universidad (Mayté, CCTS).

In that one day Michael and Saul told me that not that I had to go to the University, because they said that they had already applied. I tell them, but as they applied, we do not need to grab transcripts, and I tell them, since you grabbed your transcripts, I did not go here to the community college. And I started reporting, with those two friends and with my mentor Elizabeth. This my friend Saul helped me a little bit how to navigate the page of the University, I got in, I went to the side of admissions, there I was reading in English, what to do as incoming freshman to the university, what to do as a transfer student to the university. Then I clicked on transfers and then there was how I was informing about, what were the requirements of the University (Mayté, CCTS).

Mayté was able to gain both emotional and technical support from her social network.

Mayté describes her friends Michael and Saul motivating her to go to a four-year university, since they had already applied to transfer themselves. This motivation from her friends to go to a four-year university is important to highlight since Mayté shared with me that her plan was never to apply and transfer to a four-year university, much less apply to transfer to a university like TSU. After spending six years in the community college, Mayté told me that she didn't feel academically prepared to pursue a university degree and thought of only getting her associate's degree. Mayté relied on her friends to

gain information for getting her community college transcripts, which is a critical component of the transfer application process. Finally, Mayté also shared how her friend Saul showed her how to navigate the university's transfer admissions page to help Mayté whenever she needed help understanding certain things since he had already applied to transfer. This is also important to highlight because some of the challenges Mayté described having come as a result of English being her second language.

The cultural production of the application process means two things; first it means that for students who have already been through the process of applying to transfer or who have already transferred to a four-year university, there is a sense of reaching out, encouragement, and a willingness to share the information and their experiences through this process. For Daniel, his friend reached out to him via text several times. For Ismael, it was making that connection at an event he was invited to and the willingness of Marco to stay connected and share information with him. Finally, for Mayté, her friends not only supported her navigating the page but they encouraged her to transfer when she never intended to transfer. Culturally producing the application process means gaining access to both technical and critical information. For Daniel, it was gaining tips on how to apply and when to apply. For Ismael, it was learning that he was guaranteed transfer admissions to TSU, based on his previous academic standing as a high school student. For Mayté it was learning about getting transcripts from her community college and about navigating the transfer application website.

Cultural Production of Academic Advising

Since students expressed not having any form of direct academic advising by anyone from TSU prior to applying, students relied on their navigational and social capitals (Yosso, 2005) to determine the courses they needed to take in order to be admitted and to transfer to TSU. Lucía relied on her navigational capital (Yosso, 2005) by calling TSU admissions and getting them to tell her where she would be able to find the information about the courses she needed to take at her community college in order to be transfer eligible. Lucía described her experience as:

After I spoke to the admissions office and that person was able to tell me, I went online and I looked at the degree plan and they do have a degree plan, so I was able to tell more of okay, are they going to take this biology course, are they going to take this physics course, or like, I know that they require some type of psychology but I don't know what specific type of psychology, you know so, yeah I was looking to take courses that definitely would transfer to TSU, and give me credit too. But I wasn't fully sure" (Lucía, CCTS).

Although Lucía called the university, spoke to someone, and gained some type of information that lead her to a degree plan that would give her the courses that she needed to take in order to transfer, the degree plan itself was still not helpful enough to fully understand the process. Lucía needed to confirm if a specific psychology course would transfer and if it would give her credit towards her degree. Lucía, did not get the support she needed from TSU. From a TRC framework, this situation could have been avoided if outreach would have been provided to Lucía, because she could have received the specific information needed based on the major she applied to transfer under. Daniel on the other hand relied on his navigational capital (Yosso, 2005) in the form of navigating the university's website via google, to learn about the courses he needed to take at his community college to transfer to TSU. Daniel described this experience as:

On the online website I researched everything online and I actually, the way that I went about it, is ah whenever I was at TCC, I googled transfer courses for TSU. And then so they had, it was a list of all the courses for every major, and so I chose Aerospace. It had all the courses that I could take at TCC that would transfer into my major, and that was just like a document that was on the TSU website. I referred to that, that was my main resource for everything (Daniel, CCTS).

Daniel seemingly had no real challenges finding information about the courses he was required to complete in order to apply and be admitted to TSU as an Aerospace major; however, the challenge with this is that as he said, this was his main resource for everything related to learning about the courses that were to be completed by students applying to transfer into Aerospace. There was no contact with a person or a developing relationship with anyone at TSU during the pre-transfer process. One might wonder, what if course requirements changed? Or, what if policies in the Aerospace program changed for community college transfer applicants? How would Daniel have been able to have access to this information without delay?

Mayté on the other hand relied on the social capital (Yosso, 2005) she gained as a result of participating in an event hosted by Achieving the Dream, a network made up of community colleges across the United States committed to helping students, particularly first-generation students, low-income students and students of color, achieve their academic and personal goals (2018, <http://www.achievingthedream.org/about-us>). Mayté described learning about the required courses she needed to take in order to transfer to TSU through one of the participants in the event:

Entonces esa persona también dijo que había un programa en el DCCD website, que ahí había como diferentes universidades en Tejas, que te decían, durante este semestre que tomar, durante este semestre que tomar. Entonces, pues yo estaba

agarrando notas y yo solita fui a la página, y ahí miré o entonces TSU pide esto, TSU me da crédito por esto, Y ahí fue cuando yo me iba informando que si que TSU te podía dar crédito por las clases que ya había terminado (Mayté, CCTS).

So that person also said that there was a program on the DCCD website, that there were different universities in Texas, that they told you, during this semester to take, during this semester to take. So, I was grabbing notes and I just went to the page, and there I looked or then TSU asks for this, TSU gives me credit for this, and that's when I was informing myself that TSU could give you credit for the classes I had already finished (Mayté, CCTS).

Mayté definitely benefitted from the social networks she was able to establish and maintain during her time at the community college. One of the benefits this social network was able to give Mayté aside from the technical assistance, was the reliable and trustworthy information to resources. Mayté's social networks were administrators and or higher education practitioners, who directly worked with first-generation, underrepresented student communities, and students of color, to ensure that they met their particular needs and goals.

Finally, Vanessa was one of the students who mentioned using the social capital (Yosso, 2005) she had access to at her community college by meeting with an advisor in order to learn more about the courses she needed to take to become eligible to transfer to TSU. She said:

When I first started the community college I was a social work major and wasn't sure if I wanted to transfer. This really didn't slow me down because the majority of the classes I took at first were basic and applied to many majors. After a year, I changed my major to education, but still was unsure if I wanted to transfer. The advisor over the teacher education program at the community college was able to help me find the classes that transferred to most of the Texas colleges. Once I decided TSU was the way I wanted to go, I used to credit equivalency resource the TSU has online to see which of my credits would apply to my TSU education, and thankfully most of them did. (Vanessa, CCTS).

Vanessa's reflection shows that she had access to an advisor in the education program at her community college. As a result, Vanessa was able to gain access to accurate and reliable information about courses that transferred to TSU. It also shows how Vanessa applied the information she gained by meeting the teacher education program advisor and used the information to navigate TSU's website in order to gain access to the credit equivalency sheet. Once she had access to the credit equivalency sheet, she was able to confirm the information about courses she had received from the advisor at her community college.

The cultural production of academic advising highlights how students gained technical information about the courses that would transfer to an institution like TSU. This information was provided by people in their social networks with knowledge of the transfer process from the community college to the four-year institution. For Mayté it was someone she met at an event hosted by an organization which advocates for students like Mayté, to become academically successful. For Vanessa, it was her community college advisor who had knowledge about the teaching education program at TSU.

Cultural Production of Financial Aid Information and Resources

For financial aid information and resources participants relied on their navigational, previous knowledge, and social capitals (Yosso, 2005) in order to "culturally produce" (Levinson and Holland, 1996) the information to apply for financial aid, including scholarships. This meant that students relied on their people they knew to gain information about financial aid and support on filing out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). For example, Christian described using his navigational

capital (Yosso, 2005) in order to gain information and resources about applying for financial aid as an international community college transfer student from Honduras. He said

I had no information whatsoever about that. I wish I had though. I had to look for scholarships in Honduras instead of TSU. It was super hard to find scholarships, I mean it took me a year to find one [...] I went to the international office, to the business office, I checked the international and transfer student website, the School of Engineering website, I talked to the faculty members in the engineering department, couldn't find anything (Christian, CCTS)

Christian's reflection shows how he used his navigational capital (Yosso, 2005) to navigate different institutional spaces in order to obtain information about financial aid resources for international community college students. Additionally, Christian describes the situation as so bad that he had to look for financial aid resources in Honduras, his home country. From a TRC framework Christian's experience shows another way TSU's TRC is limited towards aspiring Latina/o/x community college transfer students like Christian. The fact that a university like TSU, is willing to admit an international community college transfer student without providing him with specific information or resources that he can use to be able to fund his education is a disservice to the student.

Mayté on the other hand used the previous knowledge she gained in her high school English class and her social capital (Yosso, 2005) in the form of getting support from her friend to gain information and applying for financial aid. She described her experience as:

Entonces cuando llegué al último año de la prepa, un maestro de inglés nos hizo que hicieramos eso para un grado, pero pues yo realmente no le entendía y no lo hize porque no, mis padres no confiaban en mí para darme su información privada, entonces no lo hize. Pero ya después un maestro me ayudó mucho, y

agarré la información de mis padres a escondidas. Entonces ahí fue cuando me di cuenta que FAFSA era una Federal Agency algo así, y este ahí fue cuando yo empecé a hacerla, poco a poquito y yo la hice solita. Ya después cuando acababa se la enseñaba a mi amigo porque le tenía confianza y ahí yo me aseguraba si había contestado la pregunta bien o no, porque todavía estaba aprendiendo inglés, le decía mira, me puedes chequear estas preguntas, estoy contestando lo que me piden. A veces el vocabulario que tenía no lo entendía, pero el me ayudaba en esa manera de como si estaba contestado bien las preguntas o no (Mayté, CCTS).

Then when I reached the last year of high school, an English teacher made us do that for a grade, but I did not really understand it and I did not because no, my parents did not trust me to give me their private information, so I did not do it. But afterwards a teacher helped me a lot, and I took my parents' information secretly. So that's when I realized that FAFSA was a Federal Agency something like that, and this was when I started doing it, little by little and I did it alone. Later when I finished I taught it to my friend because I had confidence and I was sure if he had answered the question well or not, because I was still learning English, I said look, you can check these questions, I'm answering what they ask me. Sometimes the vocabulary that I had did not understand it, but he helped me in that way as if the questions were answered well or not (Mayté, CCTS).

Mayté's experience shows how her exposure to the FAFSA through her high school English teacher helped her learn about the technical part of filling out the FAFSA application. Mayté also shared that one of her high school friends provided her with support by making sure she was answering the questions correctly. Mayté took it upon herself to go behind her parents' backs and obtain the information she needed to fill out the FAFSA application. However, as she later shared in one of our conversations, when she applied for financial aid as a community college transfer student, Mayté didn't get awarded financial aid the first time she submitted her FAFSA application. She eventually got support from Mr. David but from a TRC framework this could have been avoided if TSU provided better outreach to aspiring Latina/o/x community college transfer students while they are still enrolled at the community college.

Like Mayté, Cruz also turned to the social capital (Yosso, 2005) he had access to in the office he worked in during the time he was at the community college to gain information and resources about financial aid. Cruz shared:

También tenía, donde trabajaba, trabajaba en un financial aid office. El director de ahí era muy amable también me ayudó mucho. El y pues su, no se era, como su, su alguien que trabajaba ahí con él o para él, o la misma oficina, también me ayudó. Ahí toda esa oficina me ayudó mucho, como era parte de su equipo de empleo. Fueron muy amables con migo y me dieron mucha información. (Cruz, CCTS).

He also had, where he worked, worked in a financial aid office. The director there was very kind also helped me a lot. He and his, he was not, like his, his someone who worked there with him or her, or the same office, also helped me. There, that whole office helped me a lot, as it was part of their employment team. They were very kind to me and gave me a lot of information (Cruz, CCTS).

Cruz thus described his job at the financial aid office at his community college gained him the support from the director of financial aid and his peers in getting the information he needed to apply for financial aid as a community college transfer student. For students who had direct access to someone at the community college like Cruz, this allowed them to be able to successfully get access to the information and resources they needed in order to apply and transfer to TSU.

On the other hand, Alejandra and Vanessa relied on their social capital (Yosso, 2005) they had through family members and various other people to support them in the process of applying for financial aid. For example, Alejandra relied on her husband, a college graduate, to learn about applying to financial aid as an international community college transfer student. She described her experience as, “ah well, my husband went to college too and he used financial aid, so he was the one who told me, and then when I

was doing my application to TSU, I like got more information about that, but nobody in person told me. It's just by the internet.” (Alejandra, CCTS) Alejandra's experience, shows how supportive family who have been through the process of applying for financial aid can be. On the other hand, Alejandra also shared that other than her husband she learned about financial aid through the TSU website while she filled out her application. From a TRC framework, this shows how TSU is not supporting the specific needs of Latina/o/x students like Alejandra because as someone who is married she did not receive any information about how her marital status would affect the amount of financial aid she would receive. Additionally, Alejandra was not aware of any financial aid resources or scholarships for TSU students who were married. Furthermore, during our conversations she mentioned that she perceived that her marital status had to do with the type of financial aid she received from TSU, which was mainly made up of loans and her being unsuccessful at receiving scholarships she had applied for.

Similarly, Vanessa, gained support in learning about and applying for financial aid through her sister and a few FAFSA representatives while she was attending high school, to gain information on how to apply for financial aid. Vanessa described her experience:

I had some support from my sister when completing my FAFSA, and when I was in high school we had various people come present information on how to apply for colleges and use resources to help us through the process. One of the presenters was the head FAFSA a lady in Waco (Vanessa, CCTS),

Vanessa's experience highlights the benefits she gained as a result of the outreach that was organized by the FAFSA representatives while she was in high school. As a result, she

became familiar with financial aid and was able to navigate the FAFSA, and to apply for financial aid as a community college transfer student. Vanesa also had her sister's support as she completed the FAFSA. This ensured that Vanesa's application was filled out completely and correctly in order to maximize the amount of the award. These findings indicate that direct financial aid information and resources are not readily available to aspiring Latina/o/x community college transfer students during the pre-transfer process

The cultural production of the financial aid information and resources describes students relying on people who are within their immediate social networks, like a teacher, friends, their boss and co-workers, and family members. It also shows, that the level of support students gain at this point in the transfer process is technical support. Mainly regarding sharing information about FAFSA at in some instances with completing the application itself. For example, Mayté relied on a friend to ensure that she was inputting the correct information when she was completing the FAFSA application. Later on she relied on Mr. David, the financial aid representative at TSU, who supported her to re-submit her financial aid application. Cruz received information about financial aid through the office of financial aid at his community college, where he was employed. Alejandra and Vanessa were supported by family members, Alejandra by her husband and Vanessa by her older sister.

In order to obtain a perspective from a TSU administrator I asked Trina, Associate Director with the Office of Financial Aid at Transfer Student University, if her office did any type of outreach for community college students at their respective community colleges. Trina responded by sharing the following:

What we do, whenever there's a college that requests us to do anything, like I remember doing one I think it was the social work, yeah social work, they had a specific or a particular program that they were doing over a couple of days for transfer students and then they asked us to do a financial aid session for them, we've done things like that. Now as far as setting up something ourselves, unfortunately we don't have the resources to have like a whole calendar or events but what we do is, whatever event is going on we'll piggyback on and say okay, you need the financial piece done for it, we'll go in and assist you with that piece (Trina, University Personnel).

Trina's response shows that there is limited support from the financial aid office at TSU for community college students in general because they have not prioritized establishing specific resources that would allow them to directly outreach to aspiring community college transfer students. Financial aid is one of the most critical components of the college going process for Latina/o/x community college students and their decision to continue with their educational goals towards transferring in general. From Trina's response TSU seems to wait for specific schools/departments, offices, or other groups/organizations to engage them in order for them to offer any type of information and resources, versus proactively outreaching to aspiring community college transfer students as an office themselves. From a TRC framework (Jain, et al, 2011) financial aid at TSU is not practicing a TRC for aspiring Latina/o/x and community college transfer students in general seeing how the participants in this study relied on their previous knowledge or their social networks to learn about and apply for financial aid.

How is anyone who is at a Texas community college going to learn about applying and gaining financial support to pursue a bachelor's degree at TSU? How does anyone develop a sense of belonging at an institution like TSU, if the financial literacy support is

not there? In the following section, I summarize key findings and provide a conclusion, as well as the content and organization of the following chapter.

Summary of Findings and Conclusion

The goal of this chapter was to explore how Latina/o/x community college transfer students at TSU, navigated and engaged in the “cultural production” (Levinson and Holland, 1996) of the pre-application transfer receptive culture at TSU. The cultural production of the pre-application transfer receptive culture highlights students collaborating with others to gain access to information and resources, that will support them during the pre-application stage of the transfer process.

Findings showed that TSU is not directly outreaching to aspiring Latina/o/x community college transfer students and not developing their sense of belonging to TSU, therefore not supporting the community college transfer mission (Jain et al., 2011). As a result, Latina/o/x community college transfer students used their navigational and social capitals (Yosso, 2005) to “culturally produce” (Levinson and Holland, 1996) the pre-application transfer receptive culture. This means that the responsibility to find, evaluate, and implement, the information to become transfer eligible and apply to TSU, is generally placed on the student. For example, students “culturally produced” the direct outreach that they were not getting from TSU, by calling TSU’s admissions office or by going directly to TSU’s admissions office themselves to speak with someone in person that would provide them with information and resources that would increase their opportunity to be admitted and transfer successfully to TSU. Furthermore, since students revealed that TSU did not provide them with specific information and resources in order

to successfully become eligible to apply, enroll, and graduate with a bachelor's degree from TSU, students relied on their aspirational, navigational, and social capitals (Yosso, 2005) to “culturally produced” (Levinson and Holland, 1996) the pre-application transfer receptive culture, in order to become transfer eligible, apply, and gain transfer admissions to Transfer Student University. This included, students learning about the transfer process, the application process, required courses for their major, and financial aid information and resources on their own or through the social and professional networks they established.

From the perspectives provided by administrators and staff at TSU, findings suggest that the pre-admissions TRC for Latina/o/x community college transfer students at TSU is limited. Although there are some offices participating in direct outreach at community colleges, there are no systemic and sustained efforts in place. Further, the data show that there are little concrete examples of how TSU outreach efforts are adapted to meet the specific needs of aspiring Latina/o/x community college transfer students. Although there is some outreach being done by TSU at the community colleges, the outreach efforts do not seem to be shared by TSU as an institution. Instead it seems that each office is providing their own outreach and some only upon invitation.

The following chapter describes how Latina/o/x/ community college transfer students use their community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005) to navigate and engage in “cultural production” during (Levinson and Holland, 1996) the post-admissions transfer receptive culture (Jain et al, 2011).

CHAPTER 5

Culturally Producing the Post-Admission Transfer Receptive Culture: Students & University Personnel

Chapter 4 described how Latina/o/x community college transfer students and university personnel navigated and engaged in the cultural production (Levinson and Holland, 1996) of the transfer receptive culture (Jain et al, 2011) for Latina/x/o community college transfer students at Transfer Student University. This chapter will discuss the findings from interviews with Latina/o/x community college transfer students and university personnel, describing how they culturally produce (Levinson and Holland, 1996) the post-admissions transfer receptive culture at TSU.

This chapter aims to answer the following research questions by putting the students' voices in conversation with the voices of faculty, staff, and administrators: What is the perceived transfer receptive culture by Latina/o/x community college transfer students at Transfer Student University? What is the perceived transfer receptive culture for Latina/o/x community college transfer students by faculty, staff, and administrators, who work with and on behalf of community college transfer students at Transfer Student University? And, How do Latina/o/x/ community college transfer students navigate and engage in the cultural production of the transfer receptive culture at Transfer Student University? How do faculty, staff, and administrators, who work with and on behalf of community college transfer students engage in the cultural production of the transfer receptive culture specifically for Latina/o/x community college transfer students at Transfer Student University? This chapter will be organized in five sections; outreach by

TSU, cultural production of information and resources, cultural production of securing housing, cultural production of the financial aid application process, and orientation, and TSU outreach post admissions.

Cultural Production of the Post-Admission Transfer Receptive Culture

Outreach by TSU

Once offered admissions to Transfer Student University, Latina/o/x community college students relied on using previous knowledge, their navigational and social capitals (Yosso, 2005) to “culturally produce” (Levinson and Holland, 1996) the limited amount of information and resources they needed to meet their needs and goals, as newly admitted transfers at TSU. When I asked students if anyone from TSU reached out to them about their admissions to the university or offered them any additional information or resources supporting their transition to TSU, the support they received was mainly provided only once they attended orientation. Before orientation students relied on their navigational, social, and familial capitals to “culturally produce” (Levinson and Holland, 1996) the limited amount of information and resources they needed to successfully make the transition from their community college to Transfer Student University. When I asked students if the university contacted them regarding their admissions, students generally described getting the generic admissions email letting them know that they were accepted to the university. Students described the general content of the email as having information regarding signing up for an orientation that they needed to attend in order to be able to officially register. Only Christian described being directly contacted by his advisor in addition to receiving the general admissions notification via email. He

described the email containing additional information regarding orientation saying, “yes, the student advisor for civil engineers [...] ah just to make sure I signed up for orientation and if I could make it” (Christian, CCTS). The fact that Christian’s advisor took the time to write him an email and personally reach out, shows a positive sign towards the School of Engineering practicing at TRC (Jain et al., 2011) towards Latina/o/x community college transfer students. This is one example of how receiving institutions and TSU in particular, can increase students sense of belonging before they attend transfer student orientation or during the fall to begin classes.

Cultural Production of Information and Resources

While most students had a general understanding on next steps including signing up to attend an orientation, the majority of the students at this point were left having to rely on their navigational, social, and familial capitals (Yosso, 2005) to “culturally produce” (Levinson and Holland, 1996) other critical information and resources they needed like academic/social support, housing, and financial aid, services needed to meet the specific situations and needs of Latina/o/x community college transfer students. For example, Christian looked for programs created to support him as a community college transfer student admitted as a civil engineer major. Since he had not been provided with any information about opportunities for him prior to attending orientation, he relied on his navigational capital (Yosso, 2005) to gain information about the programs and opportunities offered to him. He described his experience as:

No. At this point I was jumping from office to office trying to figure out what programs I qualified for as a civil engineering transfer student. I went to the civil engineering advising office, to the Engineering Career and Advising Center, and

Engineering Student Services. The information I got from them was very limited, as most of the programs offered like TSLC (pseudonym) are mostly for freshmen and sophomore students and at that point I was in my first semester as a Junior (Christian, CCTS).

In contrast to Christian's earlier experience in which his advisor reached out to him over email to make sure he had signed up to attend transfer orientation, Christian had a less positive experience with being contacted by anyone from TSU, who could tell him about programs and other opportunities, for community college transfer students in civil engineering. At this point in the transfer process, Christian was interested in learning about all the opportunities and possibilities he had access to but he found limited information. From a TRC framework (Jain et al., 2011) three things stand out; first, the outreach done by TSU seems to be limited to having newly admitted community college transfer students commit to coming to orientation. The goal of outreach should not only be to get the student to come to orientation, but to provide them a preview of what the university has to offer them for the next two-to-three years, reinforcing that the student belongs at the university he is transferring into. Second, there seems to be a limited amount of programming to meet the needs of Latina/o/x community college transfer students at TSU. In the end Christian mentioned that he learned about TSLC or Transfer Student Learning Communities, but as he mentioned not all incoming community college students are eligible to participate in this program. These two things may lead Latina/o/x community college transfer students to have a limited sense of belonging to a university like TSU, where they already are a racial/ethnic minority and once they come into the

university will also be a minority to the traditional first time in college student population, which is predominantly made up of traditional age going college students.

Cultural Production of Securing Housing

During my conversations with students about their experiences during the transfer process after they were admitted, two of the greatest challenges and sources of concern for Latina/o/x community college transfer students at TSU, were securing housing and a financial aid package that met their specific needs. One of the challenges with housing that students brought up was that decisions for transfer admissions go out much later than freshmen admissions, therefore by the time community college students find out they have been offered admissions, housing options are limited. When I asked students if the university offered them information about housing for community college transfer students, they all said no. Two of the participants, Carina and Alejandra, added that since they were local and married, they were not in a position where they needed that resource. The rest of the students moved from out of town and used their navigational capital (Yosso, 2005) to secure housing for themselves. Only, two participants Daniel and Cruz used their social and familial capitals (Yosso, 2005) to “culturally produce” (Levinson and Holland, 1996) the information or the relationships they needed in order secure housing before they transferred to TSU. For Daniel and Cruz this meant relying on their friends and family to gain access to housing opportunities.

Christian and Mayté were the only students who used their navigational capital (Yosso, 2005) and applied for university housing and only Mayté was successful in securing housing through the university.

Christian described his experience with trying to secure university housing as:

Well I did what most freshmen do when they transfer to colleges, apply for housing at the university but it was full and they only admitted freshmen and I thought okay, I'll just look for an apartment. I just happened to be very lucky that in my same orientation another guy from Mexico was looking for an apartment and a roommate, so we met at orientation and we decided to be roommates. It turned out to be pretty good, I was really lucky. (Christian, CCTS).

Christian's reflection shows that even though he couldn't secure housing through the university, he felt positive about the outcome. Christian described being "lucky" since he found another student who was looking for a roommate. However, students should not have to depend on chance to find a place to live, especially when a student is moving from another city. From a TRC framework, Christian's experience shows how TSU does not fully acknowledge or prioritize the specific needs of Latina/o/x community college transfer students. The fact that housing mainly prioritizes first-year (freshman) students shows the lack of a TRC by TSU, especially for those students who are moving from another city or state and need a reliable and permanent place to live during their transition to their new city.

Mayté, on the other hand, applied her navigational and social capitals (Yosso, 2005) to apply to live in the university dorms through university housing. She described her experience:

No, eso sí, eso no. Eso lo hice yo también yo solita. Después yo tenía que buscar un lugar en donde vivir y de reciente yo miré a Kingresolve (pseudonym), yo quería un lugar para todas las mujeres. Entonces en eso yo empeeze a aplicar pero no estaba segura si vivir aquí o afueras. Entonces una mentora back in Dallas, she told me, ella me dijo, Mayté yo quiero que tu primer año lo vivas en la escuela, para que te adaptes al ambiente, para que te sientas que perteneses ahí, a esa cultura. Si vas como un transfer student y te apartas a tu propio apartment te vas a sentir aislada de la comunidad, pero si vives dentro de la escuela te puedes

desenvolver un poquito más, con las distintas reglas, y coasa que hay [...] y así fue como la escuché, y apliquee, y ella también me ayudó como este, que te piden, cuanto vas a pagar, y eso. Y luego pos ya aplicqué por la aplicación y ya ese préstamo que agarré lo agarré para pagar este la vivienda (Mayté, CCTS).

Do not. Yes, not that. I did that myself too. Then I had to find a place to live and recently I looked at Kingresolve (pseudonym), I wanted a place for all women. So in that I started to apply but I was not sure if I lived here or outside. Then a mentor back in Dallas, she told me, she told me, Mayté, I want your first year to live in school, so that you adapt to the environment, so that you feel that you belong there, to that culture. If you go as a transfer student and you go to your own apartment you will feel isolated from the community, but if you live inside the school you can become a little more, with the different rules, and know what is [...] there and then. It was like I listened to her, and she applied, and she also helped me like this one, that they ask you, how much you are going to pay, and that. And then pos and apply for the application and already that loan that I grab hold it to pay for this housing. (Mayté, CCTS).

In contrast with Christian's experience with university housing, Mayté had a positive experience and was able to secure housing in an all girls residence hall. Although Mayté shared that she learned and applied for university housing on her own, she was encouraged to live on campus by one of her femtors from her hometown. Her femtor suggested that living on campus would support her during her transition to the university as a community college transfer student. In addition, Mayté also shared that her femtor helped her with figuring out some of the details regarding the application for housing and fees. From a TRC framework and based on Christian's experience with university housing, it is possible that housing for community college transfer students may be determined on a student by student basis. However, TSU should prioritize increasing university housing and housing resources for community college transfer students, in particular for students who are involved in a domestic partnership, married, or have children.

Yosdi, Ismael, and Vanessa used their navigational capital (Yosso, 2005) to find housing through various online resources. For example, Yosdi relied on a roommate finder page on Facebook to find a place to live. She said, “So I had to look for it by myself on Facebook, TSU Roommate finder [...] my current roommate, she posted that she needed a roommate for “24 Regidores,” (pseudonym), and you know we talked and I got in. [...] yeah it is hard, and then you have to start early as well, and I was like, this happened in may (Yosdi, CCTS). Yosdi’s experience shows how she applied her navigational capital (Yosso, 2005) to navigate social media and expand her housing opportunities. Yosdi also shared that since she came in as a transfer student she did not find out about her admissions until May, and this made it difficult to find a place to live. This shows how the university may create an additional and an unnecessary burden for Latina/o/x community college transfer students, by placing the responsibility to look for and secure their own housing later than the majority of students. For Latina/o/x community college transfer students, this may result in living situations that may impact their overall wellbeing and academic performance.

Ismael, shared that since he didn’t really know the city he was moving into, he relied on his navigational capital (Yosso, 2005) by using Google to find housing. He [said](#). “It was all by myself, I didn’t really know the area. I’ve only come here for the field trips to the capitol but I’ve never been around TSU. Yeah, I just like Googled apartments and all that stuff so, I ended up getting like a really expensive apartment” (Ismael, CCTS). Ismael’s unfamiliarity with his new city including the lack of information and resources about housing from the university, put Ismael in a situation where he rented an apartment

beyond his means. Later he also shared that getting the apartment he found created a financial burden for him, saying, “It was out of my budget but at the same time, like my scholarship was covering it, but at the same time it was creating a financial burden, it was taking away my living stipend” (Ismael, CCTS). Ismael shared that because he decided to lease the apartment he went over his budgeted housing allocation causing him to use money he had reserved for other living expenses. In our conversations he also shared that when he needed additional money he went into his savings that he was able to secure by working during the summer before transferring. Ismael’s situation should could have been avoided had TSU provided him with more support to find housing. When universities do not provide housing options for community college transfer students, they can at least provide information and resources for reliable and more affordable housing options.

Finally, Vanessa, described using her navigational capital (Yosso, 2005) by using different resources such as the web and phone, ultimately driving to American City to find an apartment, through a realty company. She shared some of the similar struggles mentioned by Yosdi and Ismael when they were looking for housing. Vanessa described her experiences:

I guess the only specific thing to the transferring process was finding a place to live! Transfer students sort of get put on the back burner and find out their acceptance much later than everyone else. I found myself torn between signing a lease in a new town so that I have somewhere to live, but risk not getting accepted, or waiting it out. I decided to wait it out, and by the time I found out that I was accepted, most of the housing had been snatched up. I tried my best to find a place online/on the phone while still in Waco but was struggling super hard. Finally, I got really stressed out because everything kept falling through and drove down to American City one day and wasn’t going to leave until I figured

out my living situation. I went to a realty company near campus and in about an hour, I had a place to stay! (Vanessa, CCTS).

Vanessa's reflection about finding housing reinforces some of the things that other students have already mentioned. In particular she described the fact that community college transfer students are notified about their admissions status much later than freshmen students are, therefore putting community college transfer students at a disadvantage with housing options. Additionally, Vanessa shared that it was stressful because she was trying to find an apartment remotely through the phone. Also, in our communication after the initial interview she shared that before finally signing the lease on the apartment she moved into, she had experienced losing an apartment she was prepared to sign a lease for right before she signed it. She was finally able to secure an apartment but the process was stressful. Again, this example continues to show how the university places greater responsibility of the transfer process and ultimately unnecessary stress on the students themselves. TSU needs to expand their housing offerings and or reliable housing resources for community college for community college transfer students.

Daniel and Cruz also moved away from their hometowns to attend TSU, they relied on their social capital (Yosso, 2005) to find a place to live. Daniel relied on his social capital (Yosso, 2005) in the form of reaching out to a friend who was a realtor, he said, "no, that was all my independent work. I was lucky enough to have a friend that lived here in American City and he was an apartment realtor. So, I asked him everything and he got me the insight of where to live and things like that. But he wasn't affiliated

with TSU in any way” (Daniel, CCTS). Daniel’s experience described one of a few positive experiences with securing housing. Daniel benefited from having a friend who was a local, knew the area, and was a realtor. As a result, Daniel was able to gain a more personal perspective into his housing options and made the best decision to meet his housing needs.

Cruz also relied on his social capital (Yosso, 2005) through his family. Cruz shared that his older brother helped him find a place to live during his first year at TSU:

No, no recibí ninguna ayuda de la escuela, nomas era la opción de que quería venir aquí, y no me acuerdo si hasta me dieron esa opción no me acuerdo si me la ofrecieron, pos aquí está caro no iba a poder, no iba a haber dinero para eso. Todo eso yo tuve que buscar la casa, ahorita estoy viviendo en una casa, mi hogar, mi residencia como se diga, la también la encontré al último momento, como tres días antes de que empezaran las clases la encuentree gracias a Dios. Si no iba a tener que ir a vivir con mi hermano, hasta encontrar algun lugar. Mi hermano vive a una hora y quince minutos de aquí, tenía que manejar esa distancia, pero si a la última semana, mi hermano fue el que me ayudó, y mas o menos batallé en encontrar un lugar que podía afford verdad, y como un back up, mi hermano compró un RV, por si la necesitaba para parquearme aca cercas. Pues ahorita nomas la compró y ahorita nomás está ahí sentada, me siento muy mal porque la tuvo que comprar pa mí. Pos si la Universidad no me ayudó para encontrar vivienda, para mi transición (Cruz, CCTS)

No, I did not receive any help from the school, it was just the option that I wanted to come here, and I do not remember if they even gave me that option, I do not remember if they offered it to me, because here this expensive was not going to be able, I was not going to see money for that. All that I had to look for the house, right now I am living in a house, my home, my residence as it is said, I also find it at the last moment, like three days before the classes started I found it thanks to God. If I was not going to have to go live with my brother, I would find somewhere. My brother lives an hour and fifteen minutes from here, I had to manage that distance, but if the last week, my brother was the one who helped me, and more or less struggled to find a place that could afford true, and as a Back up, my brother bought an RV, in case I needed it to park me here fences. Well now I just buy it and right now, it's just sitting there, I feel really bad because I had to buy it for me. Pos if the University did not help me find housing, for my transition. (Cruz, CCTS)

Cruz's reflection provides a more complex perspective of the process some first-generation Latina/o/x community college transfer students experience in trying to secure housing in a new town. Cruz's experience brought up a few things that no one else had brought up. First, Cruz mentioned that he didn't remember if the university had given him the option to live on campus but that it was too expensive to live on campus and he was not going to be able to afford it. Cruz raised the issue of the reality of living on campus and having to pay a premium for the convenience of living on campus. Second, for Cruz, finding a place to live was not an experience that only involved him or that only affected him. It also involved his family and specifically his brother. Since Cruz couldn't find a place to stay, his brother bought an RV that Cruz was to park near campus and live in to be able to attend TSU. This example speaks to the sacrifice his brother made in order for Cruz to be able to attend a university like TSU. It also speaks to the guilt that first-generation students may feel when family members make sacrifices like Cruz's brother in order for students to attend college. At the end Cruz shared with me that a few days before he started school, he was able to find a room to rent through one of his brother's friends.

The cultural production of securing housing shows that students relied on friends and family members to secure housing for the academic year. Daniel, was able to tap into the resources and the knowledge of being familiar with the city through his friend, who was a professional realtor. For Cruz, he was able to secure housing through his extended social network by way of one of his older brothers. This also shows that culturally

producing the post-admissions transfer receptive culture involves more people that someone's immediate network, as a result this process may extend people's social networks.

When I interviewed Jay who coordinates the Transfer Year Experience Program at TSU, I asked him if he knew of the university offering housing for community college transfer students. He shared the following:

Transfer students can apply, so that's my understanding. Transfer students can apply for housing just like any other student, but housing has been given the directive to have as many first-time in college students [...] and so I believe, some transfer students might get skipped over in the cue to let in a first-time in college student. But I do know there are transfer students who live on campus, so [...] I don't know how they balance it. (Jay, University Personnel).

Based on the experiences of the eight students who used their navigational and social capitals (Yosso, 2005) to secure housing in order to transfer to TSU and on Jay's comment, it seems that community college transfer students are not prioritized by TSU for on campus housing. From a TRC framework (Jain et al., 2011) Latina/o/x community college students should be prioritized and given physical space at TSU housing and or affordable housing options near the university. This will provide students the opportunity to increase their sense of belonging while they transition into the university. In the following section I will discuss student's experiences dealing with the limited amount of information and resources to meet their needs as Latina/o/x community college transfer students.

Cultural Production of the Financial Aid Application Process

Financial aid was another source of stress among students after being offered admissions to attend Transfer Student University. Given that additional information regarding financial aid and scholarship opportunities for Latina/o/x community college transfer students was limited at TSU, students had to do individual research to find the necessary funding to meet their financial needs and responsibilities as students, daughters, sons, siblings, parents, partners, or as siblings with permanent legal-custody of younger siblings often an issue when parents have been deported, students relied on their navigational, social, and familial capitals to gain the information and resources they needed to secure funding. Additionally, at least five students worked either in the summer and or during the school year to meet the financial need they weren't able to through the university. This will be discussed in more detail in the "financial aid awarded" part of the findings section in chapter 6. In this section I will describe how some students used their navigational capital to secure financial aid and others applied their social capital (Yosso, 2005) to "culturally produce" (Levinson and Holland, 1996) the information and resources they needed to secure financial aid.

Daniel was the only participant that shared that he received an email from someone that was affiliated with TSU, informing him that there was a scholarship for transfer students called the "Terry Transfer Scholarship" which he was encouraged to apply for. In addition, he shared that aside from the information he was able to get from TSU, he used his navigational capital (Yosso, 2005) and conducted his own research and applied to external scholarships not affiliated with TSU. He shared:

Um, scholarships in general, I pretty much applied to the ones that were on the application portal. So, whenever you apply like the financial side pops up, I went there and then I also searched Engineering transfer scholarships, and I submitted an application to that, But it was all like through Google and stuff. Other scholarships that, like the Jack Kent Cook scholarship and other smaller scholarships, I learned from TCC. So, for me TSU wasn't very helpful, the only one that I learned about was the Terry Transfer Scholarship (Daniel, CCTS).

Daniel's experience shows that in general he depended on using his navigational capital (Yosso, 2005) in order to navigate the internet and gain information about potential scholarships for community college transfer students and students in Engineering. Also, this shows that the majority of the information about scholarships that he qualified for was readily available through his community college. Although he did mention that someone from TSU reached out to tell him about and encouraged him to apply for the "Terry Transfer Scholarship," from the a TRC framework (Jain, et al., 2011), the university could do more to outreach and increase awareness amongst community college students that this scholarship exists.

Additionally, as a DACA student, Yosdi relied on her navigational capital (Yosso, 2005) to personally go to the university and speak to someone about applying for TAFSA to be able to attend TSU. Yosdi shared:

I went to the financial aid office and I asked, what can I do so I can get money? And the lady upfront she helped me a lot [...] but it was already April, so she was like, "you might not get anything just cause its April, we already distributed the money, since the deadline was march 15th. She's like "but you know what just send it in, you never know" and I did [...] I applied very late because I was scared that even though I would turn it in I wouldn't get any money. It happened to me before, when I was in high school and I wanted to go to Sam Houston, even though I turned in the application early I did not receive anything (Yosdi, CCTS).

Yosdi's reflection highlights two challenges that Latina/o/x DACA community college students face during the transfer process and in gaining financial aid. First, DACA students may have fear, specially under the current Trump administration and the anti-immigrant sentiment that has been manifested and spread all over the country. This fear may delay or dissuade them from seeking the information and resources they need or even discourage them in applying for aid at all. This fear is also coupled with the fear of applying and not receiving aid as Yosdi shared. One of the main concerns for Latina/o/x college students is affordability (Ornelas and Solórzano, 2004) and for students who can't secure financial aid this means that they may not be able to pursue a college education. The second challenge DACA students face, comes from how they are currently asked to apply for aid. The process to apply for financial aid as a DACA student requires that students print the application, manually fill it out, and then mail it in or deliver it to the financial aid office of the institution they are applying to transfer to. This may present a problem to students like Yosdi, since the priority to apply for financial aid is March 15th and community college students don't find out about the status of their application for transfer admissions until May (See Footnote²⁴). Given the current anti-immigrant climate around the country and the historical anti-immigrant culture at TSU, a community college DACA student may hesitate to apply by the financial aid application deadline in March, when they will not find out if they are admitted until May. Students also may not want to submit an application for financial aid, since doing so may require that they provide

²⁴ For the sake of anonymity of the institution, the study retracts this source. For a copy of this and others sources retracted in this study please contact the author.

personal information about their parents and family, therefore increasing the fear amongst students and their families. From a TRC framework (Jain et al., 2011) TSU does not acknowledge the lived experiences of all their students, including the different identities and legal statuses they may have. This is evident from seeing how there is a limited amount of outreach dedicated to ensuring that aspiring DACA community college transfer students, are provided with the encouragement and information to apply for financial aid.

As an international community college transfer student Christian used his navigational capital (Yosso, 2005) to search through various university websites looking for scholarships that would allow him to find funding to cover the cost of attending TSU. He described:

It was just me browsing through the TSU website. I looked in the international and transfer student website. In the civil engineering department website, in the School of Engineering. I was mostly looking for merit based and need based scholarships offered by TSU, given that I cannot apply for grants because I am not a U.S. citizen. Most of the information I found however, had as a requirement: “Be a U.S. citizen or resident.” I realized at that moment that financial aid from TSU would be very limited, hence I looked for scholarships outside of TSU. Through outside scholarships and support from various family members I gathered enough money for my first semester at TSU (Christian, CCTS).

Christian’s experience shows that even after using his navigational capital (Yosso, 2005) searching for scholarships through various websites affiliated with TSU he couldn’t find reliable information or resources that led him to any potential scholarships as an incoming international community college transfer student. As a result, he had to find scholarships outside of the university and also relied on family members’ financial support. From a TRC framework (Jain et al., 2011) we can see that TSU conducts limited

outreach regarding financial aid opportunities for their aspiring international community college transfer students. There also seems to be a limited amount of information and resources regarding institutional and external funding opportunities for international community college transfer students. This may place an additional unnecessary burden on students and their families in looking for information and resources to secure funding to continue pursuing a college education. This is a responsibility that should be shared with the university and not entirely be placed on the student and their family.

Ismael had a different experience than most of his peers. He used his previous knowledge as well as his social capital (Yosso, 2005) amongst his peers to learn information about and apply to the, “Jack Kent Cook” undergraduate transfer scholarship. He described:

I researched it myself, so yeah, I knew it existed but like nobody directed me to it. I was just like looking it up and figuring out how to apply to it, and then randomly, whenever I was doing my application process for that scholarship, I found out that I had two other friends that had been recipients for it. Like a while back, yeah they provided some guidance for me and everything (Ismael, CCTS).

Ismael’s experience shows how aspiring transfer students deal with the limited amount of outreach and resources provided in order to secure funding. Ismael benefited from learning that a scholarship for community college students pursuing to transfer to a four-year university existed. Specifically, he benefited from his social network since a few of his friends were recipients of the scholarship he was applying to. Ismael’s experience shows that aspiring Latina/o/x community college transfer students cannot and should not rely solely on the four-year university they are transferring in for financial support.

Mayté also shared that she used her social capital (Yosso, 2005) by reaching out to Mr. David, the TSU representative she met during the college fair she co-organized at her community college. When Mayté transferred Mr. David worked for the office of financial aid at TSU. Mayté shared:

Entonces este cuando yo le hablé a Mr. David que ya había sido aceptada, el hizo una junta conmigo para ver si yo había, a solicitado la ayuda financiera de FAFSA. Y yo le dije que si la había echo, pero que todavía no me contestaban nada, y luego el me dijo, bueno pos vamos a esperar un tiempo, le digo si está bien. El tiempo pasó, me llegó esa ayuda financiera, pero solo cubría la mitad de mi colegiatura. Pero en eso yo le dije que cuando yo venía a la Universidad, pos yo estaba sola, no iba a tener la ayuda financiera de mi familia. Entonces ahí fue donde el me dijo que volviera entregar la aplicación como una persona independiente, porque ya había cumplido la mayoría de edad, para aplicar como independiente (Mayté, CCTS).

Then, when I spoke to Mr. David, who had already been accepted, he made a meeting with me to see if I had requested financial assistance from FAFSA. And I told him that if he had done it, but they still did not answer anything, and then he told me, well we're going to wait a while, I tell him if it's okay. Time passed, I got that financial help, but it only covered half of my tuition. But in that I told her that when I came to the University, because I was alone, I was not going to have the financial help of my family. Then that's where he told me to return the application as an independent person, because he had already reached the age of majority, to apply as an independent (Mayté, CCTS).

Mayté's experience provides an example of how the students in this study were able to benefit from developing a social network that included individuals that work at the different offices at both the two and four-year institutions. Mayté relied on the relationship she established with Mr. David during the college fair she had co-organized at her community college. During our conversations Mayté shared that before the college fair was over Mr. David had provided her with his contact information and encouraged her to reach out to him once she knew if she had been admitted to TSU and needed

additional support with financial aid. Mayté contacted and met with Mr. David to talk about her financial situation since she was admitted but did not get awarded any aid. From what she shared, it appears that the initial decision was based on a technicality. In her case it appears that Mayté filled out the FAFSA and filed as a dependent student when she should have filed as an independent student. Mr. David then asked Mayté to revise her application and resubmit it as an independent student. From a TRC framework (Jain et al., 2011) two issues arise: one, Mr. David, is a good example of how TSU is practicing a TRC for Latina/x/o community college students aspiring to transfer to TSU. Two, this is not enough. In the end, Mayté was able to secure financial aid; however, TSU can have a stronger commitment to provide direct outreach to potential Latina/o/x community college transfer students and situations like this may have been avoided.

The cultural production of the financial aid application process shows that students rely on their social networks of friends or professionals, to gain access to information that would support them in applying to scholarships or financial aid. For Ismael, he reached out to friends who were recipients of the scholarship he was awarded. Mayté on the other hand had relied on Mr. David, who at the time she applied to transfer to TSU worked for the financial aid office at the university. Having access to people with specific technical knowledge benefitted both. Ismael was awarded the “Jack Kent Cook” undergraduate transfer scholarship and Mayté was awarded additional financial aid once she re-submitted her FAFSA application with the support of Mr. David. In the following section I will discuss student’s experiences with orientation and dealing with the ideological conditions for coming from the community college as transfer students.

Orientation

TSU started offering transfer student orientation beginning in the summer of 2015, before then community college transfer students participated in a general orientation that included the majority of incoming freshmen and transfer students from other four-year universities, including those students admitted under FTP. In this study, Mayté and Ismael, were the only community college transfer students who did not participate in a transfer student orientation. For Mayté and Ismael, this meant not having access to transfer specific programming, including information or resources that were specifically designed to support their transition as Latina/o/x community college transfer students. In general, for students who participated in a transfer student orientation, this was the event where they received information and resources available to them at TSU as community college transfer students. From the perspective of the students who participated in this study, two major events happened during orientation. First, students were able to meet with an advisor in the college of their major and depending on how many students were transferring into that major, they had a brief fifteen-minute appointment that went over registering for fall classes. Students were then asked to set up an appointment for an extended advising session once the semester started. For students who were part of a college or major with a smaller number of incoming community college transfer students, they were able to take advantage of a longer advising session and went over their educational plan and registering for fall classes. Second, all students described having the opportunity to directly or indirectly get connected with or learn about some of the programs, student organizations, and services that TSU provides their

transfer students. The following section explores the experiences of two students who came to a transfer student orientation where community colleges and students who came from community colleges were devalued and perceived to be less academically rigorous than a university like TSU.

During transfer orientation there were several events that produced feelings of not belonging, panic, fear, pressure, and nervousness that carried over to their first semester at TSU. During my conversations with Lucía, she described a talk by a university dean, where he addressed incoming community college transfer students and told them that TSU was at a higher academic level than the community college they came from. This talk produced feelings of not belonging, panic, and fear amongst Lucía, she described her experience and how she used her aspirational capital in order to overcome them. Lucía kept bringing up the fear of not being able to do well once classes got started:

I don't know, once they said that, it was actually one of the deans. I don't know if it was the dean, I am not sure but it was one of the deans giving out the presentation and he mentioned, you guys are here and you were accepted but in order for you to continue being here you need, to be able to apply yourself and the level of your community college is here [indicating lower level] and this is like the level of UT and UT courses [indicating a higher level] and all that stuff. So, once he said that I got really scared and panicked because, like your school expects more than 100% of you and your time because you obviously want to do a good job on it, but you also have you know like a job and bills to pay and then like your family and all of that stuff so. It was overwhelming" (Lucía, CCTS).

Lucía's experience highlights how TSU devalues community colleges as institutions of higher learning and invalidates the lived experiences including, the skills and knowledge, that community college transfer students bring with them. Additionally, by the Dean taking on the position of how TSU is at a "higher level" instead of developing or

increasing the sense of belonging amongst community college transfer students, he created fear in them. The Dean's position ignored the roles and responsibilities that Latina/o/x community college transfer students may have other than being students.

Lucía, also shared her feelings of not belonging, fear, and panic and how she developed her strategy to combat the Dean's comments:

I am guardian of my sister and I have to take care of her and at the same time take care of myself and support myself financially and still like take care of school, so it's just like (ugh-sound of frustration and overwhelmed). So before coming to TSU um specifically because of what the session that we had at orientation, it kind of scared me because it said that you know, transfer students usually come with a really high GPA but at the end of the first semester they have like they're in the middle, they're like with a 2.5 or 2.0 I didn't want to be one of those uh people so, I worked three jobs during the summer in order for me to be able to pay for everything this semester (Lucía, CCTS).

Lucía expressed that her responsibilities extended beyond herself. She was legally responsible for the well-being of her younger sister. Additionally, although the Dean's message affected her emotionally, Lucía used her aspirational capital (Yosso, 2005), to grapple with her situation by working three jobs and to create the space and environment she wanted to be in during the school year. Which was that she didn't want anything to hold her back from doing well in school.

Cruz also shared a similar experience. Cruz described the messages that were communicated to him during his transfer orientation, about TSU being really hard compared to other universities and the community colleges students came from, sharing that:

O si! Esa transición como le digo no me gustó mucho porque ese, esa orientación porque por todas partes se excuchaba que esta Universidad iba a estar muy difícil, que estaba más difícil que otras universidades, que si fuiste el tutor en un

community college, aquí todavía ibas a batallar con ese mismo curso y todo eso, y pos eso pos espanta a cualquiera, me espanto un poco, y ya cuando llego aquí y estoy en las clases y todo eso pos si, [...] me afecto un poco porque me metió miedo, ya llendo a las clases pos tenía esa preocupación verdad, de que iba a hacer difícil, de que no iba a hacer tan bien y todo eso (Cruz, CCTS).

Or if! That transition, as I said, I did not like it very much because that, that orientation because everywhere I was excited that this University was going to be very difficult, that it was more difficult than other universities, that if you were the tutor in a community college, you were still going to fight with that same course and all that, and after that it frightens anyone, I'm a bit frightened, and when I get here and I'm in classes and all that, yes, I [...] feel a little bit because it made me afraid, already going to the classes, I had that concern, that I was going to make it difficult, that I was not going to do so well and all that" (Cruz, CCTS).

In contrast to Lucía's experience, Cruz seemed to have heard these messages from different sources. This also created a dislike for the transfer orientation session and fear within himself. The fear most impacted him during his first semester in the classes he was enrolled in. He was worried that he wouldn't be able to perform well because the classes were going to be difficult. Nothing from what Lucía and Cruz have shared so far indicates that TSU acknowledges or respects who community college transfer students are and the institutions they come from. Instead of developing or reinforcing a sense of belonging amongst community college transfer students, they are creating fear and self-doubt. Cruz also shared how this affected him:

No si me afectó, bueno como quiero cambiarme de Civil Engineering a Mechanical engineering, tengo en la mente que tengo que tener muy buen GPA para que me acepten. Y pos con eso en mente y luego también con este que va a estar mucho más difícil es mas o menos una presión que la noté mucho en los primeros exámenes que cada clase, de que cuando iba a empezar en el examen, taba bien nervioso y por ejemplo, en un examen taba muy fácil, era fácil era nomás como dibujar, uno de los problemas era nomás de dibujar un dibujo en otra página pero mas grande verdad, con las mismas [...] como se dice dimensions o mas o menos, si pero mas grande verdad, y si era nomas era como puro juicio sin nada de eso, pero no sé en ese examen y en los demás se me fue la

mente en blanco por la presión y por todo eso que me habían dicho, no se como explicar, pero pos si si me afectó en los primeros examines. Ya después de los primeros examines ya ahorita ya creo ya entiendo mas o menos como hacerle para no, para que no me afecte en los nuevos examines (Cruz, CCTS)

Not if I am affectionate, as I want to change from Civil Engineering to Mechanical Engineering, I have in mind that I have to have a very good GPA to be accepted. And then with that in mind and then also with this one that is going to be much more difficult, it is more or less a pressure that I noticed a lot in the first exams that each class, that when I was going to start in the exam, I was very nervous and for example, in a very easy exam, it was easy to draw just like, one of the problems was to draw a drawing on another page but bigger truth, with the same [...] as they say dimensions or more or less, yes but bigger truth, and if it was nomas it was like pure juicio without anything of that, but I do not know in that exam and in others the mind went the target to me by the pressure and by everything what they had said to me, I do not know how to explain, but if yes I am affected in the first examinations. After the first exams and right now I think I already understand more or less how to do it for no, so that it does not affect me in the new tests (Cruz, CCTS).

Cruz's reflection on how transfer orientation affected him during his first semester, speaks more of how the university places unnecessary responsibilities and pressures on community college transfer students. For Cruz there was more than just his GPA at stake. In another conversation we had Cruz share that he wanted to apply to internally transfer from Chemical to Mechanical Engineering, because he realized that as a Mechanical Engineer he had more career opportunities. But after his experience at his transfer orientation he was concerned that he would not be able to have the required GPA and not be accepted. For Cruz, his decision to change majors and enter a career as a Mechanical Engineer has professional and socio-economic implications. Furthermore, this is a good example of how the messages devaluing community colleges and the students that come from them that were being spread during transfer orientation, can impact students emotionally and academically. Eventually, Cruz describes that now he knows how to

prepare himself so the messages he hears at transfer orientation don't affect him during the tests. Next, Cruz shared how he developed strategies for each type of test he took.

Cada examen tiene su manera, por ejemplo, después del primero ya se que tengo que acabarlo aunque cometa algun error o algo tengo que hacerlo rapido. En otro examen si tengo que seguir igual, nomas tengo que estudiar bien y aprenderme todos los conceptos, como la palma de mi mano. No es fácil veda, en uno lo tengo que hacer igual, en otro lo tengo que hacer mas rapido, en otro tengo que estudiar un poquito mas, eso ya se pero al principio el primer examen pienso que fue por lo que me dijeron y por la presion por eso (Cruz, CCTS).

Each exam has its own way, for example, after the first one I know I have to finish it even if I commit some mistake or something I have to do it quickly. In another test if I have to stay the same, I just have to study well and learn all the concepts, like the palm of my hand. It is not easy, in one I have to do the same, in another I have to do it faster, in another I have to study a little more, I know that but at the beginning of the first exam I think it was because of what they told me and because the pressure for that (Cruz, CCTS).

From the way Cruz describes his test taking strategies it shows that he has developed an action plan for each type of test he is required to take in his Mechanical Engineering courses. This is something that he has developed on his own as he navigates the different ideological and physical spaces in the School of Engineering at TSU. Cruz ends by saying that at the beginning during his first exam, he performed the way he did because of the messages he heard during his transfer orientation and the pressure he felt that caused him. From a TRC framework (Jain, et al, 2011) Cruz and Lucía's experiences show the type of ideological power structures that create an unreceptive transfer culture for Latina/o/x community college transfer students. Nothing about these Cruz and Lucía's experiences show that TSU and the transfer orientation, is creating or increasing the sense of belonging for Latina/o/x community college transfer students. Further, so far there is very little indication that TSU is doing to show that they understand that Latina/o/x

community college transfer students transfer into the university having additional roles and responsibilities aside from being students and that these require additional support and attention by the student but also by the university. In the next section TSU administrators and staff describe how they engage and support Latina/o/x community college transfer students once they have been admitted to TSU.

TSU Outreach Post Admissions

Given the continuous need for Latina/o/x community college transfer students to confront institutional barriers and challenges and culturally produce the physical, intellectual, and emotional transfer receptive culture, even before starting classes, I asked university administrators and staff how their offices support Latina/o/x community college transfer students before, during, and after transfer student orientation. Citlali, Associate Director for New Student Services (NSS), shared several things NSS does for transfer students in general. Citlali mentioned that as director of NSS she began working toward eliminating some of the institutional barriers that may add unnecessary or additional stress for some transfer students with registering to attend orientation and or registering for classes. She said:

We put in a deferment process for registration to relieve the stress of having to pay the orientation fee for our students who need it based on financial aid. And we have worked with campus partners to ensure that classes are metered so that new students get the opportunity to register for classes they need to stay on track regardless of the orientation session they attended (i.e. the first or the last one) (Citlali, University Personnel).

Although none of the students who participated in this study shared that they had experienced any challenges in registering for orientation and or in enrolling in courses for

financial reasons, this process aims to benefit Latina/o/x community college transfer students who may need this additional support. From a TRC framework (Jain, et al, 2011) the deferment process for transfer orientation registration has established and institutionalized a way for all community college transfer students, regardless of their race/ethnicity and or socio-economic status to register and attend transfer orientation. NSS has used their institutional position in the university to partner up with schools, departments, and programs to monitor student enrollment and work towards eliminating other institutional barriers that Latina/o/x community college transfer students may experience during their first semester at the university, such as when trying to enroll in courses, specially major specific gatekeeping courses.

In terms of transfer orientation programming, Citlali shared that although NSS does not directly cater to Latina/o/x community college transfer students, it strives to support them in different ways:

I would say that NSS acknowledges different identities by having various options for students to partake in. For instance, we know that there are students with families and/or jobs who can't afford to stay long on campus. So, we have worked hard to condense the program with the most vital information first. We also know that there are students who want more social interactions, usually the 19-21 aged transfers, so we have optional programming late at night for them. We understand there are various identities that attend orientation, so we work with campus partners to make sure that office that specialize in supporting various identities are present (Citlali, University Personnel).

Citlali's response shows that NSS has taken the time to know the transfer student community at TSU by learning from how transfer students have responded to previous transfer orientations in the past. From a TRC framework (Jain et al, 2011), NSS is doing their best to make sure that they serve the various needs of a diverse community of

students. By organizing the transfer orientation program to include the most critical information for incoming transfer students, TSU strives to ensure that incoming Latina/o/x community college transfer students know about the resources available to them as TSU students. Additionally, by allowing students an opportunity to socialize after regular transfer orientation activities, Latina/o/x students had an opportunity to socialize and develop their social network at TSU. NSS involves different departments, offices, and student groups, as part of the transfer orientation providing incoming Latina/o/x community college transfer students with an opportunity to put a face to someone or to a campus identity that can support them. Overall, NSS is working towards developing and or increasing a sense of belonging to TSU amongst Latina/o/x community college transfer students.

Citlali described that once the students get to campus, NSS continues to engage with them, Citlali shared, “once they are accepted and get to campus, we promote the campus resources available on all of our social media channels so that students know where to go for support with academic, social, emotional, physical, and mental challenges” (Citlali, University Personnel). From a TRC framework (Jain, et al, 2011) NSS is being pro-active in trying to keep transfer students engaged via their different social media outlets. This provides an opportunity for Latina/o/x community college students to have quick access to the resources they made need and provides them with day-to-day updates of what may be happening on campus that may be of interest to them. These are more opportunities for Latina/o/x community college transfer students to increase their sense of belonging at TSU. Citlali also shared that NSS participates in

events that build on transfer student orientation to support students in continuing to be engaged throughout the year by connecting them with other resources they may need.

We coordinate extended orientation events meant to reintroduce resources mentioned at orientation so students can engage with campus partners. Examples include the RISE Summit (for second semester freshmen and transfers to reflect on their first semester), and all the events we host at the Transfer Experience Center with LCAE, Sanger, CMHC, UHS, the MEC, and other valuable campus resources. We also do a lot of collaborations with the student organizations that have a lot of transfers such as the Texas Transfers Students and the Student Veteran Association (University Personnel).

From a TRC framework (Jain, et al, 2011) NSS does seem to provide different resources to enable Latina/o/x community college transfer students to achieve their personal and academic goals. From my personal involvement and observations, the RISE academy aims to provide students with academic resources, opportunities to get involved with extracurricular activities, and become more integrated with the university. NSS therefore has programming in place to addresses a lot of the challenges that Latina/o/x community college transfer students may face at a four-year university, in addition to a dedicated space at the university for transfer students in the Transfer Experience Center, which helps keep transfer students connected with other valuable resources that TSU offers and adds to how TSU practices a TRC.

Jay, who coordinates the Transfer Year Experience Program at TSU shared what his office is doing to keep community college transfer students engaged post orientation. Jay shared that the TYEP has created learning communities specifically for transfer students. He also shared that recruitment and enrollment for this program happens during summer and spring orientations.

Yeah, I'll say that the most robust program offered here for community college transfer students, is the Transfer Student Learning Communities or TSLC, so it's the learning community where groups of 15 to 20 students take two to three courses together. Typically, they meet once a week in their small groups with a peer mentor, who is likely a transfer student, who is in their same department or college, and with a facilitator whose most likely an academic advisor from that department or college. So, they take classes together as a group and they get weekly mentoring from the mentor facilitator (Jay, University Personnel)

From a TRC framework (Jain, et al, 2011), the learning communities for transfer students may be a good place for Latina/o/x community college transfer students to both increase their sense of belonging at TSU and an opportunity to gain the information, resources, and support to achieve at a high academic level. The learning communities provide a small community environment within a large often impersonal university like TSU. This allows Latina/o/x community college transfer students opportunities to develop relationships with other students like them, including learning from a student facilitator who is also a transfer student and can be of support throughout the academic year. Having an academic advisor be part of the learning community may also be beneficial to Latina/o/x community college transfer students, since they have direct access to someone who can support them navigating the institution. This helps students keep up to date with course requirements, policies, and resources that may meet their specific needs and goals. Enrolling students in three academic courses together allows them to form study groups and gain the support they may need to achieve academically.

Jay also shared that during the spring semester transfer students may be able to take one core course specifically created only for transfer students.

We offer transfer only signature courses, so these are courses that are part of the core curriculum here, and all students need to take this course unless they're core

complete at another Texas college or university. So, a community college student, who has earned the full associate's degree is most likely core complete, and they wouldn't need to take a signature course. However, for all of our transfer students about 70% to 75% still need that course, and it is designed to be taken your first year. (Jay, University Personnel).

Transfer only signature courses are another example of how TYEP is creating a TRC for Latina/o/x community college transfer students at TSU. These courses and the opportunity of being in a classroom with all transfer students provides students a good space to continue getting acclimated to the university while building on their personal, academic, and social skills, in an environment where they are surrounded by like peers. Finally, Jay also commented that they the FYTP continues to engage community college transfer students throughout the academic year by collaborating with student groups who do mentoring.

We also work with different student groups who do mentoring. The primary one is the group called "Transfer Students" (pseudonym) and we work with them to create the mentorship program. We help connect them with other college contacts when they want to do workshops or service projects, or socials on campus. We provide general guidance to the organization. We also have other ones located in specific colleges and schools that do mentorship programs. Those are one on one mentorship programs, where the TSLC (pseudonym), that one mentor, mentors 15 to 20 students (Jay, University Personnel)

Mentoring in the FYTP is another example on of the available continuing support for community college transfer students. This component of the transfer student programing shows how Jay and the FYTP can help Latina/o/x community college transfer students to navigate the university to ensure that they have access to the information and resources they may need. The FYTP supports incoming community college transfer students by way of supporting student organizations that provide mentoring for transfer students.

Mentors who are part of organizations like “Transfer Students” (pseudonym) can provide insights on how to navigate the university system, academic and social support, and most importantly, the social-emotional support that Latina/o/x community college transfer students may need as minoritized students in a PWI like TSU.

Craig, an academic advisor in the College of Liberal Arts (COLA), also shared his perspective from an advisor’s point of view. Craig provided a few examples of how the COLA engages community college transfer students before, during, and after transfer student orientation. He shared that once admitted community college transfer students, “...will meet with their respective major advisor(s) at orientation. What that looks like varies by department. For transfer students we don’t really know who is coming until a few days before orientation” (Craig, University Personnel). COLA seems to be practicing a TRC by setting students up with their major academic advisors. One concern, however, is that academic advisors don’t know the students who are attending transfer orientation until a few days before the orientation. This may present some challenges because advisors may not have adequate time to know enough about a student’s academic background to be able to advise her or him at orientation.

Craig also shared that some of the challenges academic advisors face during orientation have to do with transfer orientation being limited to a day and a half. He said: “Due to the size of our transfer classes and the short timeframe of orientation, those conversations are just surface level academic classes to take. Anything beyond that varies by department” (Craig, University Personnel). From a TRC framework (Jain et al, 2011) this model may not be the best for incoming Latina/o/x community college transfer

students who often have specific needs that cannot be addressed through a brief surface level advising appointment. Craig did add that advisors in the COLA try to schedule a follow up appointment with their students as part of extended orientation. He said: “We try to do a better job of doing like a follow up right before class starts or even like once class begins” (Craig, University Personnel). This is a good example of a TRC because having students return for a follow up advising appointment provides them an opportunity to check in with their advisor and update them on any happenings since their initial appointment. This also shows that the academic advisors at the COLA care about staying in touch with their students by engaging with them throughout the semester, by developing a relationship with them, and increasing their sense of belonging at TSU. In the next section I will provide a summary of key findings, conclusions, and an overview of the following chapter.

Summary of Findings and Conclusion

The goal of this chapter was to explore how Latina/o/x community college transfer students and university personnel, culturally produce (Levinson and Holland, 1996) the post-admissions transfer receptive culture for Latina/x/o community college transfer students at TSU. Findings overall showed that once students were admitted to TSU, the university had limited communication with them. The main communication students received from the university was the generic admissions email with instructions on next steps, including registering for orientation. Only Christian shared that he received a direct email from the student advisor for civil engineering, to make sure he signed up for orientation. Additionally, two of the greatest challenges and sources of concern for

Latina/o/x community college transfer students were securing housing and a financial aid package that met their specific needs. Since two of the students who participated in this study transferred in the fall of 2014 and transfer programming at TSU began during the summer of 2015, only eight out of ten students who participated in this study attended a transfer student orientation. Students who participated in a transfer student orientation generally said that this was the event where they received information and resources available to them at TSU as community college transfer students. Two students Lucía and Cruz shared that they experienced certain events and activities during orientation where they received messages, that TSU was going to be more challenging than the community colleges they came from because TSU was at a higher level. This caused Lucía and Cruz to develop a sense of not belonging, fear, and unnecessary stress. In the end Latina/o/x community college transfer students used their previous knowledge along with their familial, navigational, and social capitals (Yosso, 2005), to “culturally produced” (Levinson and Holland, 1996) the information and resources due to the limited direct outreach by TSU post admissions, including information on and securing housing and the financial aid application process.

In terms of how TSU engages and supports incoming Latina/o/x c community college transfer students, the study also finds that there is extensive transfer programming and dedicated administrators and student staff that directly work with transfer students. For example, New Student Services (NSS), has implemented a deferment process to pay for orientation for students that may not be able to pay for it at the time of registering for orientation. This allows students to register and attend orientation and once they meet

with their advisor enroll in their courses. NSS is also using their institutional position at the university to partner with different schools, departments, and programs to monitor student enrollment in high demand courses, thus providing Latina/o/x community college students more opportunities to enroll in their major upper-division courses. NSS further offered Latina/o/xs support and the opportunity to stay engaged during and after transfer student orientation. For example, during the one and a half day orientation students are exposed to the most critical information and resources available to them as transfer students at TSU. After transfer student orientation they are reintroduced to resources on campus through what they describe as, extended orientation events and activities.

The study also found that Latina/o/x community college transfer students may be able to receive additional support through the First Year Transfer Program (FYTP). The FYTP offers community college transfer students the opportunity to participate in TSLC, which are small learning communities where groups of 15 to 20 students take two to three courses together, meet once a week in their small groups with a peer mentor, who is a transfer student in their same department or college, and with a facilitator who is an academic advisor from that department or college. In the spring semester, community college transfer students are also eligible to sign up for a signature course specifically designed for transfer students in mind, and finally through the FYTP, community college transfer students have the opportunity to join the “Texas Transfer Students” student organization and access mentors. Academic advising in the College of Liberal Arts (COLA) at TSU, also engages incoming community college transfer students during orientation and beyond. From the perspective of COLA community college students

attending orientation meet with an academic advisor in their major. Initial appointments are brief lasting 15 minutes, but academic advisors schedule follow up advising appointments with their students before classes start or early in the semester.

From the perspectives of Latina/o/x community college transfer students it seems that due to the limited amount of direct outreach by TSU, students continue to use their community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005) to “culturally produce” (Levinson and Holland, 1996) the post-admission transfer receptive culture (Jain, et al, 2011) up until they attend their orientation. However, from the perspective of TSU administrators and staff, they seem to believe that they have the institutional mechanisms set in place so that admitted Latina/o/x will not have to face any challenges in registering for orientation and or enrolling for impacted courses. Additionally, it seems that since 2015 their general transfer programming and support services have dramatically improved. There seem to be continuous limited amounts of culturally relevant programming and resources, however, to meet the needs that may directly affect Latina/o/x community college transfer students at TSU, especially in making sure that students secure financial aid and housing that meets their needs during the post-admission process. Finally, TSU can also work on creating a more welcoming environment for Latina/o/x community college transfer students by not promoting ideas that the community colleges they come from are institutions of less quality than TSU, or that students themselves are not academically prepared to handle the academic rigors of an institution like TSU. These messages promote an anti-transfer sentiment devaluing the community college as an institution and

the lived experiences of Latina/o/x community college transfer students, including the skills and knowledge they gain as a result of going to a community college.

The following chapter describes how Latina/o/x/ community college transfer students use their community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005) to navigate and engage in “cultural production” during (Levinson and Holland, 1996) the post-enrollement transfer receptive culture (Jain et al, 2011).

CHAPTER 6

Findings: Culturally Producing the Post-Enrollment Transfer Receptive Culture

Semi-Structured Interviews with Students & University Personnel

This chapter aims to answer the following research questions by putting the students' voices in conversation with the voices of faculty, staff, and administrators: What is the perceived transfer receptive culture by Latina/o/x community college transfer students at Transfer Student University? What is the perceived transfer receptive culture for Latina/o/x community college transfer students by faculty, staff, and administrators, who work with and on behalf of community college transfer students at Transfer Student University? How do Latina/o/x community college transfer students navigate and engage in the cultural production of the transfer receptive culture for Latina/o/x community college transfer students at Transfer Student University? How do faculty, staff, and administrators, who work with and on behalf of community college transfer students engage in the cultural production of the transfer receptive culture for Latina/o/x community college transfer students at Transfer Student University? This chapter will be organized in four sections; financial aid awarded by TSU, cultural production of financial aid, cultural production of an academic supportive environment, cultural production of a social supportive environment.

Culturally Producing the Post-Enrollment Transfer Receptive Culture

After attending orientation, meeting with their academic advisor, and enrolling in their fall courses, students were set to begin their first semester at TSU. Once the fall semester started, students relied on using previous knowledge, their navigational and

social capitals (Yosso, 2005) to “culturally produce” (Levinson and Holland, 1996) the limited amount of information and resources they needed to meet their needs and goals as Latina/o/x community college students who had been admitted to transfer to TSU.

Following tenets three and four of the transfer receptive model (Jain et al., 2011) I asked students questions regarding the type of financial aid they were awarded, the type of academic and social support they were provided with, if they thought TSU acknowledged their lived experiences and identities as community college transfer students, the different identities that they identified with, including the different roles and responsibilities they had on top of being students.

Financial Aid Awarded

Securing financial aid and housing were the major stressors among the students who participated in this study. This is important because several students shared that either a family member or their family depended on some type of financial support from them. When I asked students to describe the type of financial aid they received from TSU, the majority of the students received aid in the form of grants and loans. Some students received the “Terry Transfer Scholarship” and a few others transferred to TSU with scholarship money they had earned while they were at the community college. Several students who had to make up for financial aid that they were not awarded either worked multiple jobs and saved during their summer and winter breaks and used it throughout the academic year, or worked part-time jobs during the academic year. A few students shared that they also relied on their family to support them when needed.

Throughout the course of our conversations one of the things that Lucia shared with me was that she was her younger sister's legal guardian. Although she never shared a lot of details of what this relationship and responsibility were like, she needed to make sure that her and her sister were financially okay. When I asked Lucia about the type of financial aid she was awarded by TSU, she shared that it consisted mostly of loans. She said, "Yes, I did get financial aid. I mostly got loans, it was the Perkins loan and unsubsidized loans" (Lucia, CCTS). The TRC framework (Jain et al, 2011) affirms that the four-year university offer a supportive financial and academic environment to meet the unique and diverse needs of community college transfer students. Lucia's experience suggests that TSU relies on loans to fund Latina/o/x community college transfer students, therefore not fully practicing a TRC. Lucia also shared that she did not receive any of the grants that she felt she qualified for as a bilingual education major and future educator. She shared her disappointment by saying, "I was disappointed on the fact that they don't offer [...] I'm an education major so I know that the government has some type of aid for education majors which you don't have to pay back, but they don't offer the teach grant or the beyond time grant" (Lucia, CCTS). Lucia's example shows that she was aware of ways to fund her education without taking out loans. To my knowledge, TSU offers the teach grant, which Lucía should have received based on her academic background and qualifications. When Lucía realized that she qualified for this grant, she shared that she went to advocate for herself asking about these grants:

Once I knew I was accepted, I did go and asked about the Teach Grant and the Beyond On Time grant because those are typically provided for education students and students who want to serve the government in some way in the

future. So that's a grant that you don't need to pay back but TSU doesn't offer that grant. So, I guess after that there's not much to do, just figure it out how you are going to pay for your courses and your bills (Lucia, CCTS).

Although Lucia was not successful in securing funding through these grants, her reflection shows how she applied her navigational capital (Yosso, 2005) to “culturally produce” (Levinson and Holland, 1996) the financial aid she needed to meet her specific needs as a Latina community college transfer student and as legal guardian to her younger sister. Her example also shows a lack of TRC by TSU because they were not able to provide her with additional information about the “teach grant” or the “beyond time grant,” or resources for additional funding that she may have been eligible for.

Lucia also shared that she tried to apply for scholarships offered by the university and she was not eligible to apply, since the application required her to have an established GPA with TSU. Lucia shared: “Also in order for you to apply for scholarships you must first have a TSU GPA. So I wasn't able to apply for any of the scholarships that they have. I mean I will after this semester, however, before like during my first semester I wasn't able to apply. So that is discouraging” (Lucia, CCTS). It is a challenge that TSU keeps transfer students from applying for scholarships offered, money that every student should have access to, because they don't have an established TSU GPA. Additionally, it does not seem that TSU has an established scholarship specifically for community college transfer students. In order to “culturally produce” (Levinson and Holland, 1996) the financial aid that Lucia needed, she described working three jobs during the summer to ensure that her younger sister and her would be okay financially and that Lucia didn't have to work during the semester.

By the end of May I had already known that I was accepted and I knew that they didn't offer the teach grant. I knew that they didn't offer any other kind of grant [...] so I didn't want to run the risk of falling behind because I needed to keep a job to pay my bills. So, I guess I wanted to keep the summer free and work 3 jobs and not be able to sleep as much or have fun or anything like that because I wanted to do well during the first semester that I was going to be at TSU. [...] If I wouldn't have worked three jobs during the summer, then I really wouldn't have had another option but to work a few jobs to be able to pay the bills because like, really what TSU provided or what was left after tuition wasn't as much (Lucia, CCTS).

Lucia's reflection shows how the limited amount of financial aid resources for Latina/o/x community college transfer students prompted her to use her aspirational and familial capitals (Yosso, 2005) and "culturally produce" (Levinson and Holland, 1996) the financial aid she needed to make sure that both her and her sister were taken care of and that her grades will not suffer. Lucia's aspirational capital (Yosso, 2005) highlights how even when faced with perceive and real financial barriers to attending a university like TSU, she made sure she secured three jobs and worked all three during the summer. Lucía knew she was not going to compromise her academics or academic standing. Lucia's familial capital (Yosso, 2005) highlights her sacrificing sleep and having fun so that her and her sister would be taken care of. This belief she developed within her family, as in other Mexican or Mexican American families, that promote familismo in which the oldest sibling is given the responsibility to support the family. (Chang 2007).

Carina, was another Latina community college transfer student who had dependents, she and her husband Chendo have a son. Chendo, was a former TSU transfer student, who transferred from another four-year university in the state of Texas. During our conversations, Carina shared that she was granted financial aid by TSU but not

enough. When I asked her if she received any additional support as a parent, she said, “no, that’s what Chendo would do, every year we would ask about it and there was nothing available, not even daycare. That’s why he’s not here” (Carina, CCTS). Transfer students have different added responsibilities because of their different academic trajectory, one being that many are older and some are parents such as Carina. Lack of consideration for students who are parents with children and their additional financial needs does not reflect a responsible TRC. In Carina’s case, the university did not create an environment where she felt sufficiently financially stable. Carina felt that she could not be a mom and a student at the same time and thus her and her partner Chendo live apart, while Carina attends TSU. Carina struggled with prioritizing school over being a mother and partner. During our conversations Carina shared that during her first semester while she was attending school full-time, Chendo stayed back home and cared for their son. This is also what Carina did when Chendo was finishing his bachelor’s degree as a transfer student at TSU. However, home was approximately four hours away and Carina was not able to visit as often as she wanted to. Carina used her aspirational capital (Yosso, 2005) to deal with sacrificing being physically and emotionally away from her son in order to pursue her education. Sacrificing her time away from her family also highlights Yosso’s (2005) Carina’s familial capital by demonstrating her strong commitment to the future well-being of her family, something some Latino families often do for the good of the family (Chang 2007). Chendo staying back home to care for their son saved them both money while their son is a physically and emotionally caring environment, while Carina completed her bachelor’s degree.

Alejandra did not have children but was married and she also shared that securing additional financial aid was a challenge. When I asked Alejandra to describe the type of financial aid she received from TSU she said, “Well, I have loans and I also work [...] like 30 hours per week” (Alejandra, CCTS). By awarding Alejandra straight loans, TSU is doing little to create a supportive financial environment for students like her. Alejandra described using her navigational capital (Yosso, 2005) to “culturally produce” (Levinson and Holland, 1996) the financial aid she needed to meet her personal needs and goals. Alejandra described applying to a scholarship specifically for transfer students: “I applied to one scholarship, but they denied it [...] I think its because I am married, but yeah applied for one and they denied it [...] I think it’s the Terry Foundation, I don’t know its long but it’s like for transfers” (Alejandra, CCTS). Alejandra’s reflection continues to show the limited financial support that TSU offers Latina/o/x community college transfer students. First, Alejandra and Daniel have been the only participants out of ten to mention the “Terry Transfer Scholarship” as a potential source of additional funding for Latina/o/x community college transfer students. This speaks to the limited amount of outreach done by TSU at the community college and the limited amount of information provided once students transfer, including promoting at TSU, so that students are encouraged to apply for this scholarship. Second, the scholarship is administered by the Terry Foundation, which means that TSU does not necessarily award the scholarship. Finally, marital status should not be used as a deterring factor when making a decision on whether to award a student a scholarship or not. This can be resolved by having the sponsoring foundation set clear and detailed qualifications to prospective scholarship

applicants. Additionally, the foundation itself can open the application criteria to allow more students including those who are married, in domestic relationships, and or have dependents to become eligible to apply and secure financial support through these types of scholarships.

Cultural Production of Financial Aid

Cruz was one of the students who received all of the different types of student financial aid available. He received grants, loans, and a small scholarship from TSU. He also shared that in the end he decided to attend TSU over A&M because TSU gave him more grant and scholarship money than A&M.

Si me ofrecieron una beca pequeña de seiscientos y algo al semestre, mil docientos y algo al año, ya cuando me habían aceptado las dos escuelas A&M y UT, pos nomás estaba mayormente estaba basado a ver cual me ofrecía más dinero, me hiba a ir a esa escuela, y pues A&M no me ofreció, de primero no mas me ofreció puros loans, UT me ofreció esa bequita chiquita y loans, y pos las dos obiamente las dos me ofrecieron los grants verdad, los que a todos les dan, los mismos grants del gobierno y pues como este me ofreció esta cantidad mayor me vine pa'ca. (Cruz, CCTS).

If I was offered a small scholarship of six hundred and something a semester, a thousand and a dozen a year, and when I had accepted the two A & M and UT schools, I was mostly based to see which one offered me more money, I wanted to go to that school, and then A & M did not offer me, first no more offered me pure loans, UT offered me that bequita Chiquita and loans, and after both obiatly the two offered me the grants truth, those who give them all, the same grants from the government and because this one offered me this amount, I came paca (Cruz, CCTS).

We see how Cruz used his navigational capital (Yosso, 2005) to “culturally produce” (Levinson and Holland, 1996) the information to select the university where he would transfer, based on the which provided him with the most debt-free money. From a TRC framework (Jain et al., 2011), how Cruz’s financial aid package was put together with a

combination of grants, loans, and a small scholarship, is still not enough evidence to show that TSU is building a supportive financial environment for Latina/o/x community college transfer students. Cruz shared other concerns that could have been avoided if TSU developed a more supportive financial environment for Latina/o/x community college transfer students:

No ayudan mucho para financiar tus estudios, uno tiene que hacerlo solo. Y está medio difícil, para mí. Se me hace difícil estar aplicando para becas, para encontrar las becas porque no quiero gastar mi tiempo en becas, que son muy difícil de agarrar verdad, quiero ayuda verdad, uno quiere ayuda con las becas para no estar gastando tanto tiempo en aplicar a becas en vez de estar en la clase, estudiando pa las clases, tiene que estar acá buscando y aplicando, y todo eso. (Cruz, CCTS).

They do not help a lot to finance your studies, you have to do it alone. And this difficult medium, for me. I find it difficult to apply for scholarships, to find scholarships because I do not want to spend my time on roof racks, which are very difficult to grasp, I really want help, one wants help with scholarships so as not to spend so much time applying for scholarships in Instead of being in class, studying for classes, you have to be here looking and applying, and all that. (Cruz, CCTS).

Cruz's reflection describes the unnecessary stressor or burden that working class and first-generation Latina/o/x community college transfer students experience in having to constantly apply for small scholarships that require tedious applications. Cruz particularly expressed his frustration over having to go through this experience on his own without support from the university. In particular, Cruz expressed not wanting to spend his time in looking and applying for scholarships that he may not get since they are competitive and sometimes involved processes. This is important because as a Mechanical Engineering major, Cruz was already spending the majority part of his time making sure he was on top of his academics in an already hyper-competitive major. Having to apply

for competitive scholarships increased his levels of unnecessary stress and caused a negative impact on his personal and academic goals. In addition, Cruz also mentioned that he welcomed support in looking for scholarships because he could not continue spending inordinate amounts of study time to do so. For Cruz the time spent in looking and applying to scholarships was a gamble since he may or may not win the scholarships. From a TRC framework (Jain et al., 2011) Cruz's realities with securing additional financial aid through scholarships, is a clear example of TSU's limited supportive financial environment for Latina/o/x community college transfer students. This type of environment can be detrimental to the overall personal and academic well-being of Cruz and students like him, who depend on financial aid to continue with their academic and professional goals.

To "culturally produce" (Levinson and Holland, 1996) the financial aid that Cruz needed to meet his personal needs and goals, Cruz used his aspirational and navigational capitals (Yosso, 2005) to secure additional loan-free money. Cruz did this in two ways: first, Cruz shared that during his breaks from school, he would work and save the money he earned, he described his experience as;

Osea en mi tiempo de escuela, en el spring y fall, era nomás estudiante enfocado en agarrar el 4.0, porque iba pensando que eso se iba a recompensar en un future con becas, ya en el summer y también en los inviernos me ponía a trabajar full-time. Y siempre estaba ocupado estudiando o este pos nomás viendo la manera de que pos para mi, la mejor manera de llegar a este punto verdad, como llegar con un poquito de dinero para no estar, para no tener que sacar préstamos y no meterme en deudas y también no tener que ser una carga para mis papás, que ellos también no si no quise ser una carga para ellos ni para mis hermanos que están pagando la casa y que están pagando todos los bills, todo eso verdad. [...] Yo personalmente ahorita no estoy trabajando porque tengo un ahorradito hasta que me lleguen las becas, todavía voy a estar aplicando a becas pero con el

ahorradiato con el ahorro que tube, también tube que pagar algunos biles en la casa, pero no era tanto que tenía que estar mas enfocado en esto (Cruz. CCTS).

Osea in my school time, in the spring and fall, I was just a student focused on grabbing the 4.0, because I was thinking that this was going to reward in a future with scholarships, already in the summer and also in the winters I got to work full-time And I was always busy studying or this post watching the way that pos for me, the best way to get to this point truth, how to get there with a little money not to be, so as not to have to take loans and not get into debt and also not have to be a burden for my parents, that they also do not want to be a burden for them or for my brothers who are paying the house and who are paying all the bills, all that truth. [...] Personally right now I'm not working because I have a little savings until the scholarships arrive, I will still be applying for scholarships but with the saving with the savings that I had, I also had to pay some bills in the house, but it was not so much that I had to be more focused on this (Cruz, CCTS).

Cruz, was one of a few participants who shared that they worked during their breaks and saved money in order to use it once they transferred to TSU. Cruz's experience described how he used his aspirational, familial, social, and navigational capitals (Yosso, 2005) to "culturally produce" (Levinson and Holland, 1996), the financial aid he needed to meet his needs and goals. In the first part of Cruz's current reflection, he described using his aspirational capital (Yosso, 2005) during the fall and spring semesters, showing that he was fully committed and focused on earning a 4.0 to be compensated with a scholarship. Working towards this goal Cruz was able to "culturally produce" (Levinson and Holland, 1996) his transfer admissions and part of his financial aid at TSU since he was awarded a \$600 per semester scholarship.

Cruz practiced his familial capital (Yosso, 2005) by sacrificing his time and energy during the summer and winter breaks working in order to be able to save money for the university and not be a financial burden to his family, or to have to depend on taking out loans and get himself into debt. Sacrificing for the overall well-being of family

is one of the beliefs that is often fostered within Mexican families (Chang 2007). By taking on full-time jobs during his breaks away from school, Cruz contributed into his family by taking away the financial responsibility from his parents for his studies and also by using some of his earnings, to pay for some of the family's bills back home. Another belief that may have motivated Cruz to work and save money for his university expenses is the belief that getting into debt is not a good idea (Heller, 2008). Cruz showed how he applied his navigational capital (Yosso, 2005) in order to apply to scholarships to secure additional financial support. Since he only received a \$1,200.00 scholarship from TSU, Cruz applied for scholarships through his department and was awarded a renewable scholarship from the department of engineering during his second semester at TSU.

As a Latina and DACA community college transfer student Yosdi, shared her experience with gaining financial support via the Texas Application for State Financial Aid (TAFSA). Yosdi shared, "Well I got TAFSA. They gave me \$5,000 for each semester. Yeah, it's really good even though I turned it in late. Other than that, my parents sometimes support me with utilities, but yeah other than that that's it, and then I work [...] around 25 a week" (Yosdi, CCTS). Yosdi's reflection shows how TSU might be developing a positive financial environment for DACA Latina/o/x community college transfer students. However, the amount of financial support that Yosdi received was only enough to cover Yosdi's tuition and left it up to her to make up for the various expenses associated with being a college student.

Yosdi exhibited use of her aspirational, familial, navigational, and social capitals (Yosso, 2005) to “culturally produce” the financial aid to meet her needs and goals by sharing that her parents support her financially by occasionally paying her utilities. This is relevant in at least two ways: first, this shows that Yosdi’s parents practice their familial capital (Yosso, 2005) with their daughter by making certain sacrifices to support her get through college. This ensures that Yosdi may have electricity and water in her apartment, ultimately contributing to Yosdi being able to continue to meet her most essential needs. Yosdi also uses her aspirational and navigational capitals (Yosso, 2005) by working 25 hours a week. Yosdi’s DACA status did not deteriorate her academic goals as she continued to use her aspirational capital (Yosso, 2005) in order to work and go to school to become a bilingual teacher in Texas. By working as a DACA student Yosdi showed that she used her navigational capital by being able to secure a job to earn the money to make up for the financial aid she did not received through TAFSA. This is important because the current political and anti-immigrant climate during the current administration makes students like Yosdi increasingly vulnerable even amongst other Latinx transfer students.

Daniel had a similar experience than some of his peers, sharing that he mostly received loans from TSU as part of his financial aid package, he shared:

So, like my first-year last year, the support that I got, it was mostly just loans. I didn’t receive many grants at all. The only grant that I received was from FAFSA, and it was a pell-grant, and it was a lot less than I thought I would get. So, the first year was a lot more difficult, like it was very difficult, like in the transition financially, and I just like, yeah it was just mostly money from me and my family, whatever they could put up, yeah. But beyond that there was no grants (Daniel, CCTS).

From a TRC framework (Jain et al., 2011) even though Daniel received the financial aid he “needed,” mainly in the form of loans, the financial environment created by TSU, puts the emotional, mental, and psychological burden on the students and their family. As a result, Latina/o/x community college transfer students may experience a difficult financial transition as Daniel did. Additionally, like the experiences of his peers, Daniel’s experience has the potential to have an immediate and or long-term financial impact on him and his family because they used personal financial resources to help Daniel meet his financial needs. Further, in order to “culturally produce” (Levinson and Holland, 1996) the financial aid, needed to meet his needs and goals, Daniel used his navigational and social capitals (Yosso, 2005) to secure additional loan free money. Daniel shared;

I used the money that I got from the stipend, from the research and then I was a tutor at TCC and I saved the money there, and then whatever I couldn’t pay off, like my dad helped me out with it. That was the first year. This year it was a lot more, like I got, this year I did get much more pell-grants, or I mean like TSU based grants. I didn’t get any scholarships that I got last year, I applied to scholarships and everything but I didn’t receive any. Like I don’t know, other than pell-grants its all mostly FAFSA, and the TSU like pell-grants, I mean the TSU grants, and the pell-grant, and then loans on top of that, and I am working this year. I’m in another research program this year and they’re giving me another stipend for the year. (Daniel, CCTS).

Daniel’s experienced shows how he used his social capital (Yosso, 2005), in order to secure additional money that he would eventually be able to use once he transferred to TSU. The stipend came from a summer research program that he was able to participate in at TSU a year before he transferred. Daniel was able to secure this opportunity because one of his professors at his former community college told him about the program and encouraged him to apply. Gaining this research opportunity provided Daniel a means to

get involved in Aerospace Engineering research at TSU, while being a student at his community college. Participating in this research program gave Daniel the opportunity to experience the academic and social aspects of being a student at TSU, further preparing him to apply and get admitted to TSU, as a community college transfer student. Daniel's reflection also shows how Mexican American parents/families continue to be an example of serving as an instrumental resource of social capital, in the form of providing their children with financial support as needed.

A few of the participants came from their community college with financial awards that they previously earned while they were at their community college. These students used their navigational and social capitals (Yosso, 2005) to secure additional funding. For example, Vanessa, shared that aside from receiving financial aid from TSU, she was also awarded a scholarship from AmeriCorps while she was at her community college. Vanessa, said;

I got something called the "continuing education grant" or something that I didn't apply for, I had no idea I had it until I realized, what's this money and then I read it and I was like, "oh UT granted me this money" so I didn't have to apply for it or ask for anything, so that was nice [...] Additionally, I received an education award through my time served with AmeriCorps in CIS. The first year of my time at TSU, I was able to split a \$5,000 scholarship from them over two semesters to help cover the cost (Vanessa, CCTS).

Vanessa's reflection shows how her navigational capital (Yosso, 2005) helped her get the "continuing education grant," a grant awarded to students who apply for financial aid via the FAFSA. Vanessa did this by gaining the information to fill out and submit the FAFSA while she was in high school, from FAFSA representatives in her school district and from her older sister, as she was applying to transfer to TSU. Her social capital

(Yosso, 2005) from her relationship with CIS through AmeriCorps, gave her the opportunity to be awarded the 5,000 scholarship. This award was applied to Vanessa's cost of attendance during her first-year at TSU, potentially saving her \$5,000 worth of loans.

From the experiences of the majority of the participants in this study, we have learned that TSU does not provide Latina/o/x community college transfer students with a positive financial aid environment because TSU does not provide financial aid that is specifically for community college transfer students and relies on awarding Latina/o/x community college transfer students loans. When I asked Trina, Associate Director with the Office of Financial Aid at Transfer Student University, about the type of financial aid TSU offered Latina/o/x community college transfer students, she replied, "For any student, grants, loans and work study" (Trina, University Personnel). From a TRC perspective (Jain, et al., 2011) her response confirmed that TSU's financial aid to specifically support Latina/o/x community college transfer students is non-existent. An institution like TSU needs to acknowledge and understand that Latina/o/x community college transfer students like the participants in this study often have additional responsibilities to solely being full-time students and merit extra consideration for financial support. When I asked Trina, if there were specific scholarships that community college transfer students can apply to at TSU, she said that there are two, the Terry Transfer Scholarship (TTS) and the [Floyd Agnew Scholarship \(FAS\)](#). Trina described the TTS as;

The Terry Transfer Scholarship, that one there's the Terry Foundation, they started off with doing, scholarships, Mr. Terry was a very you know, came from humble beginnings and really worked really hard, and was very successful, I believe in the oil industry. So with his beginnings and how he went down the path of education, he wanted to provide an opportunity for other students in Texas. So, there's this whole application and interview process that they go through and is a very good support system. I can't remember when they started the transfer student scholarship, but the regular or the initial scholarship was already put into place. So a few years later, they started the transfer student scholarship, cause they found that there's students of course they start off in one area in community college or whatever and they wanted to provide them with opportunities to transfer into a four-year university or college and go on. So we've got a really good relationship with the Terry Foundation, but it is Terry's money, is not TSU money (Trina, University Personnel).

Although the TTS, may be a good source of financial support for Latina/o/x community college transfer students, there are a few challenges with this scholarship program. One of the challenges is that only two of ten participants knew about the scholarship and were able to identify it as an opportunity for additional financial support. In this case, TSU has made a poor job at outreaching to incoming Latina/o/x community college transfers students and informing them about applying to this scholarship. A second challenge with the TTS is that the transfer scholarship came out of a scholarship program created with the traditional college student in mind. This may be a challenge because student needs and characteristics may vary drastically across race/ethnicity, gender, age, socio-economic status, etc. This may automatically discourage students to apply seeing how their backgrounds and lived experiences may not be valued. Additionally, depending on student application qualifications, may disqualify students that can apply, like hours completed, student status, marital status, and age to name a few. Finally, Trina made a critical point in her response, by stating that "it's Terry's money" and not "TSU's

money,” This may imply that Terry and his foundation have full control of running the TTS program. Terry and the foundation select the TSU community college transfer students that get awarded his scholarship instead of financial aid staff. Trina, mentioned a second scholarship that is available to community college transfer students, the Floyd Agnew Scholarship (FAS).

We do have another one and [...] it’s an affiliate of or I should say, its affiliated with TSU because, its one of our, I want to say maybe endowed scholarships, but it is [...] I think its called the “Floyd Agnew Scholarship,” So we get some scholarships, or we set up some scholarships, we may have a person or a couple of people or group of people that come to us and say, hey we want to set up a scholarship with TSU, we want ya’ll to administer it, but we wanted to go to this type of student. So the “Floyd Agnew Scholarship,” [...] That is scholarship for those students. Is not a huge program, so we may award maybe 2 maybe 3, but I think is more like 2 a year. So is not a huge pool of money that we are able to award from. But one thing that we have stressed to our development office is when you are all out there, looking for entities to donate scholarship dollars, that is a huge area that we are needing funds, specifically for transfer students (Trina, University Personnel).

The FAS program can be a better scholarship program for incoming Latina/o/x community college transfer students, because as Trina mentioned TSU acts as the scholarship program administrator. This gives TSU more flexibility in terms of setting the student application qualifications and evaluation criteria, to ensure that the most deserving students received the award. One of the challenges however is the limited number of scholarships that can be awarded on a given academic school year. From a TRC framework (Jain et al., 2011), TSU currently provides a limited positive financial aid environment for Latina/o/x community college transfer students. TSU should engage Latina/o/x community college transfer students and find out more about their specific

financial needs in order to create the resources to be able to serve this population of students better.

Academic Support

When I asked students to describe the type of academic support they received as community college transfer students, they generally described getting the general academic support every college student has access to such as tutoring, the writing center, and office hours with their TA's and professors. Daniel was the only student who provided extensive details about his experience with the academic support he had been able to get in his department. Daniel shared:

Okay, that has been really great! As far as the aerospace department goes, its ah, yeah, like I said, in our TSLC seminars, my advisor was there. So like she was always there for an hour at least a week, to help us with anything, any questions we had, any problems we were having troubles with, she told us about tutoring, if we had problems with tutoring, I mean, if we had problems in class, we knew about the tutors and what time they were going to be there, the TA's a very helpful, and the, but exclusively for transfers students, it was just the TSLC seminars (Daniel, CCTS).

From a TRC model (Jain et al., 2011) Daniel's participation in the TSLC seminar through the aerospace department, may have the potential to be a space that encourages Latina/o/x community college transfer students to achieve at a high academic level. From Daniels reflection this seminar may be one where students get the practical information on how to navigate the institution as community college transfer students. If this space is going to be a transformative space for Latina/o/x community college transfer students and encourage them to achieve at the highest level, the curriculum and teaching methods must be transformative also. By transformative I am suggesting that these teaching practices

focus on encouraging students to engage in peer learning activities, where students take turns in facilitating the material amongst each other. This provides the space and opportunity for students to showcase their facilitating skills and also positions them as holders of knowledge and expertise on the given topic they are facilitating. This may increase their self-esteem and encourage them to continue engaging in these types of activities. On the other hand, several students also shared that they didn't know of any academic support specifically for community college transfer students. Mayte, for example, shared: *"pues la verdad mientras yo estuve en TSU, yo no escuché mucho acerca de programas para transfer students* (Mayte, CCTS) "well, the truth is, while I was at TSU, I did not hear much about transfer programs." From Mayte's reflection, we see that even after transfer student programming had started she was not aware of any additional academic support for community college transfer students. This speaks to the lack of on campus outreach and visibility by the TYEP at TSU amongst Latina/o/x community college transfer students at TSU. Similarly, Ismael shared that he was never offered any academic support specifically for community college transfer students at TSU.

Ah, as a transfer student, in regards to being a transfer student. I wouldn't I have received any. Ah, its just the general support from like student services or the writing center, all that stuff, but nothing in regards to transfer student, directed to kind of my academics. Like I said there is that one lady from like the building, where she is reaching out to us, but not necessarily for academic support (Ismael, CCTS).

Ismael's reflection is important because he was the only participant who shared that he sought support from the student mental health services because he had some personal

challenges. He partially attributed these challenges to the stress he underwent with his academics. Ismael also shared that he switched majors and went from being an Economics major to Human Dimensions of Organization major. Having additional support that addresses the specific needs that Latina/o/x community college transfer students may face including with being a student, may have prevented Ismael seeking mental health support and him switching majors.

Students who did not participate in the TSLC at TSU used their aspirational, familial and navigational capitals (Yosso, 2005) to “culturally produce” (Levinson and Holland, 1996) the academic and or emotional support they needed to become successful. For example, Cruz, who was not served by any of the transfer student programing, relied on his navigational capital to culturally produce the academic support he needed to be academically successful. He described his experience as, *“sí, ahí sí he ido, he ido a tutoring labs como se llamen, para diferentes clases como a veces vengo aquí a jester, aquí hay unas y a veces voy a las de mi departamento, también ahí hay otras clases. P’os cuando necesito ayuda p’os la busco.”* (Cruz, CCTS). “Yes, there and gone, and went to tutoring labs as they are called, for different classes as I sometimes come here to jester, here there are some and sometimes I go to my department, also there are other classes. Pos when I need help after I look for it ”(Cruz, CCTS). From Cruz’s reflection we see how he used his navigational capital to “culturally produce” the academic support he needs to be academically successful. Cruz used his institutional knowledge to determine where he could get support for different things related to his major. Cruz identified two different places where he could go and get the tutoring he needed at particular times.

Finally, Christian was another one of the students who did not participate in any of the transfer student programming offered by TSU. When I asked Christian how he overcame the academic challenges that he experienced as a result of not having any direct academic support, he said:

Just you know, honestly my first semester was super rough. Specially coming from a community college that the workload is very low, you don't expect it to be as demanding and competitive as TSU, it was rough. To overcome this, I thought of all the effort my family had put into my education and sending me to the US. My appreciation for that effort and my desire to succeed kept me from crumbling down (Christian, CCTS).

Christian brought up an aspect of “cultural production” (Levinson and Holland, 1996) that other students who participated in this study also brought up about different contexts. Students used familial capital to become re-motivated or re-inspired when they were facing challenges. For Christian he used his aspirational and familial capitals (Yosso, 2005) as a source of motivation by reflecting on the sacrifices his family made to send him to the United States, so that he could attend college. The aspirational capital motivated him during these challenging times, which he described as being in a rough academic environment. Christian used his familial capital (Yosso, 2005) by reflecting and acknowledging the personal and familial sacrifices and desires of his trajectory, in order to remain motivated and to overcome the challenges or difficult situations. This is a good example of how some of the Latina/o/x community college transfer students in this study used ideas or beliefs of sacrificing and life desires as motivation and expressed these as part of their aspirational and familial capitals (Yosso, 2005). From the TRC perspective, TSU is not doing their part to outreach at both the prospective students

community college, during the pre-enrollment process or at the university once students are already enrolled, to promote the transfer student programming. Overall, the participants in this study described receiving a general type of academic support and only a few were either aware of, or participated in specific academic support for transfer students.

I also interviewed two faculty Lupita and Juan, who teach signature courses for transfer students as part of TSU's TYEP. Lupita, a Professor of Sociology at TSU, shared that, "I always make myself available to all of them" (Lupita, TSU Faculty). As a Latina professor, the fact that Lupita willingly makes herself available to her Latina/o/x community college transfer students shows how professors like her are practicing a TRC for these students inside their classroom. Having this disposition with her students allowed Lupita to develop a supportive academic environment to help her Latina/o/x community college transfer students develop overall academic success in all of their classes. During our conversations Lupita shared that being a Latina professor has helped her Latina/o/x transfer students in her classes identify with her at different levels, allowing them to feel more comfortable in reaching out to her whenever they needed support.

Lupita shared:

One of the things that I do in my class is, I introduce them to a librarian [...] So one of the things that I do is teach them about the institution you know, the library, the library system, the services, the writing center, to participate in events also. So help them to become integrated I guess, you know just to become familiar with the system (Lupita, TSU Faculty).

From a TRC model (Jain, et al., 2011) Lupita contributes to practicing a TRC in the classroom in order to enable the students to be academically successful at an institution

like TSU. Students can benefit from the practical knowledge associated with the resources Lupita exposes her Latina/o/x transfer students to. Having knowledge of the library system and writing center, gives her students resources to gain information they may need for an assignment in a more efficient and effective way that can save students time and energy that they can use to focus on their assignments. Additionally, the less barriers or challenges students have to confront, the more likely they are to create a supportive academic environment. Juan, associate professor in psychology at TSU, shared:

I provide my Latino/a students the same kind of academic support, that I would provide anyone else. But that said, I'm also aware of the obstacles and difficulties that a student like that could experience. Cause a lot of students, you know and again, there's nothing wrong with that. If you have parents who can provide for you and you know, who can give you their credit cards, take you know to buy things and stuff like that, that's wonderful, and more power to you, there's nothing wrong with that. And I will provide that student with you know my very best. I will help them in whichever way I can to do well. But, if it's a student who doesn't have the means to be able to provide for themselves in that way, who needs to work so that they can provide for themselves in some way. Then I am also sensitive to that and I recognized that, and I'm willing to, you know if it means that I have to meet with you, at 6:30 in the evening instead of 11:30 in the morning, then I will try to do that if I can (Juan, TSU Faculty).

As a first-generation Latino community college transfer student himself, Juan like Lupita, is practicing a TRC inside his classroom. He understands that Latina/o/x transfer students may confront different challenges and difficulties that students who may have more financial resources will not or do not have to. As a result, Juan tried to eliminate other challenges that Latina/o/x transfer students may have by being flexible with the time and the place he may meet them for office hours. This is how Juan created a supportive academic environment. Also, during our conversation, Juan mentioned that in the past

he'd met his Latina/o/x students in other parts of campus, including their workplace during the student's break in order to provide that student with the support needed at that time. This provided his student with the information needed about a test s/he was preparing to take as part of one of Juan's courses. This is a good example of a TRC (Jain, et al., 2011) in the classroom because Juan is doing his best to eliminate any additional challenges that may keep his Latina/o/x transfer students from being academically successful.

I also asked Juan and Lupita to describe any distinct opportunities that they offered their Latina/o/x community college transfer students, so they can achieve at a highest academic level. Juan shared:

I don't provide them with any like, [...] any special opportunities. I think special opportunities suggest that I provide them with something different that I would provide anyone else, and I don't. I provide them with [...] anyone who reaches a certain threshold, who wants to for example, work in my laboratory they can do that. But that's true for any good student, that said, a majority of the undergraduate researchers in my lab, have been of underrepresentation. Either African American or Latino/a. Obviously, I've also had a good number of White undergraduates, but the majority of them have been, and it's not because I'm providing them with any special resources or anything, and I don't know the answer for why that is. Maybe they feel more comfortable working in a laboratory like mine. Cause they know that I might be able to understand things that they go through in the ways that other people can't (Juan, University Personnel).

Although Juan may not directly provide any distinct opportunities for his Latina/o/x community college transfer students to achieve at a high academic level, the way he runs his class in terms of giving additional opportunities to students who meet certain academic expectations is evident. Additionally, he describes that in general his labs are

made up by underrepresented students, this may be because of his culturally relevant teaching practices.

From a TRC model (Jain, et al., 2011) Juan's perspective on providing Latina/o/x transfer students with additional opportunities once they reach a certain goal in his class, provides a good example of how faculty at TSU, may be supporting a TRC in their classroom. His students need to reach a certain academic level, thus promoting high academic achievement levels. Participating in a lab at the university with a professor like Juan, may also motivate Latina/o/x community college transfer students to continue to achieve at a high academic level. For one, Latina/o/x students have a role model in Juan since he may share a similar experience with them as a former community college transfer student himself. Juan's example may reinforce a positive race/ethnic and academic identity amongst his Latina/o/x transfer students. Finally, being in this type of academic environment may also motivate Latina/o/x community college transfer students to continue getting involved in similar practices, like being part of a lab outside of this course and even in pursuing a graduate degree.

In addition, I also asked the academic advisors in this study to describe the type of academic support their departments offered community college transfer students. Ericka, associate academic advisor in the College of Education at TSU, described the academic support offered:

So, I feel like is not directly aimed at community college students or at students who transfer from community college, but they definitely benefit from it and one of those is, the P.O.W.E.R Program. It's an academic success initiative, and we do that particularly with our applied learning and development students because they have to have a 2.5 GPA to get into their professional development sequence. So,

helping get to that point and there's a lot of reflection on like what habits do you have, like what do you feel your challenges have been, like do you have any personal obstacles that are kind of affecting you, like and also connecting them to resources depending on what they say and also gets them [...] part of that program is getting them engaged with faculty members, so checking in pretty regularly (Ericka, University Personnel).

From a TRC model (Jain, et al., 2011) the P.O.W.E.R. Program may be promoting a type of supportive academic environment for Latina/o/x community college transfer students, to achieve at a high academic level. However, it is a program for students enrolled in the applied learning and development program so it may not apply to all the students who transfer into to college of education. Second, they use a 2.5 GPA benchmark for students who need to enroll in their professional development sequence; this is below a B average and may be good enough for this particular program but if students want to pursue graduate or professional school in the future, this program is not setting them up to be competitive to apply, most programs require at least a 3.0 GPA. From Ericka's response it seems like the P.O.W.E.R program help students identify three main things; first, this program may help students identify their personal weaknesses or limitations. Second, this program may help students find resources based on what their personal weaknesses or limitations are. Third, this program connects them with faculty that provides a space where they can be mentored. From Ericka's description of the program, none of these components focus on providing students with a space where they are provided with the type of teaching they need to be reassured that they can achieve at a high academic level as community college transfer students.

Craig, senior academic advisor in the College of Liberal Arts (COLA), also shared:

COLA offers TSLC (Transfer Student Learning Communities) to all transfer students. There is an academic support program called UTURN for students who experience some struggles. Different departments have their own support structures. Of course, many COLA students are also a part of DDCE programs and initiatives. I'm not sure if any of those are specifically targeted at transfer students though (Craig, University Personnel).

Craig's response demonstrate a limited version of academic support promoted from a TRC model. TRC promotes that a supportive academic environment be created around teaching practices that reassure community college transfer students that they can achieve at a high academic level (Jain, et al., 2011). From my conversations with students who participated in TSLC's and from Jay, who coordinates the transfer student programming at TSU, the type of support offered through TSLC's is associated with connecting students with resources and or providing them with technical support around issues or challenges they may face in navigating the institution. UTURN, on the other hand, seems like a program set in place to support students after they have experienced academic challenges. Therefore, this program does not offer Latina/o/x a space where they are academically supported and motivated to excel academically seeing how these students would probably benefit more from an academic support program that would facilitate students learning the academic skills and strategies they need, so that they would never be in a situation where they need support after they have been unsuccessful.

Jay, Senior Academic Program Coordinator of the Transfer Year Experience Program at TSU shared:

So, one thing that is not exactly exclusive to transfer students but is a good program for them is, the Learning Center for Academic Excellence (LCAE), through the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement. So that program has a component called the Transition Support Program (TSP), that supports transfer students. Really is kind of been re-purposed to basically help transfer students get their foot in the door to use, LCAE resources. So the biggest portion of that and why I bring it up, is that their tutoring is only available to specific populations on campus. It might be students who are from underrepresented groups based on socioeconomic status or race/ethnicity, but they've also open it up to any transfer student on campus. So we're as at the primary academic support unit on campus, Sanger Learning Center offers 5 free one on one tutoring sessions a semester, LCAE offers unlimited one on one tutoring to transfer students (Jay, University Personnel).

The academic support services described by Jay may be a good example of a supportive academic environment for Latina/o/x community college transfer students at TSU.

However, it may be limited in two ways; first, the program is not specifically designed with the transfer student population in mind. As a result, it may or may not be a space that is receptive to Latina/o/x community college transfer students, since they may or may not feel that they can connect with the students/staff who are part of this program. This may be as a result of racial/ethnic background, the lack of culturally relevant approaches to tutoring, previous academic experiences, different learning styles, or age to name a few. Second, although they do offer support through tutoring, the type of tutoring that may be offered does not necessarily mean that their tutoring approach works well with Latina/o/x community college transfer students to promote that they can achieve at a high academic level.

From the perspectives of the TSU personnel in this study, the type of academic support offered to Latina/o/x community college transfer students seems weak and inconsistent across the different programs and departments at TSU. For example, the type

of academic support that is being practiced by most of the university personnel who were part of this study, is connecting students with resources on campus that may lead to students gaining the academic support they need to achieve at a high academic level. While this is important because it can lead to students gaining the support needed, this is not enough. What may happen in this situation is that because students are being referred to different places, students might spend energy and time that they can use towards studying in trying to find the academic support they need without finding it. The current tutoring model set in place at TSU, for example, was not created with the specific needs of community college transfer students in mind. Therefore, even when Latina/o/x community college transfer students have access to tutoring, it does not mean that the tutoring they receive is effectively meeting their specific academic needs. Therefore, the current academic support model at TSU, is not completely aligned with a TRC model and practice of a supportive academic environment (Jain, et al., 2011) for Latina/o/x community college transfer students. In the next section, I will describe how Latina/o/x community college transfer students applied their community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005) to culturally produce (Levinson and Holland, 1996) the social support, that met their personal and family needs and academic goals at TSU.

Social Support

Another critical aspect about the community college to university transfer process is the social support of the transfer experience, including but not limited to, student organizations, programs for university students, and other support services. When I asked students to describe the type of social support they received from TSU as community

college transfer students, no one could name any type of social support specifically for community college transfer students offered at TSU. A few students did share that they knew about a transfer student organization on campus, but they did not participate in it. Regardless, students in this study, used their aspirational, familial and navigational capitals (Yosso, 2005) to “culturally produce” (Levinson and Holland, 1996) the social support they needed at one point or another to meet their specific needs and goals. For example, there were a few students who shared that during the academic year they needed social support. Mayte, was one of the participants who shared that she felt like she did not belong at a university like TSU. She attributed her insecurities to being a native Spanish speaker and part of it was that she was always surrounded by students who were younger than her. After two years of being at TSU, one of Mayté’s mentors at TSU Ms. Lynn, encouraged her to apply to be part of the McNair Scholars Program, a program that prepares and supports underrepresented students in applying to graduate programs with the goal of completing their Ph.D. (See Footnote²⁵). Mayte’s participation in McNair became the type of academic and social space that met her needs as a Latina community college transfer student and motivated her to meet her academic goals. Mayte describes her experience in McNair:

Fue hasta el 2016 que me empecé adaptar un poquito mas, y los últimos del 2015, los últimos meses del semestre del spring del 2015. La razón fue porque en eso escuché acerca de McNair, y esa fue, puedo decir que McNair fue el primer programa después de dos años que me dio una oportunidad de creer en mi misma, que me hizo sentir que, que sí, que sí, pertenecía aquí. Entonces ese programa fue el que, el que me ayudó mucho a desenvolverme más, a ser más

²⁵ For the sake of anonymity of the institution, the study retracts this source. For a copy of this and others sources retracted in this study please contact the author.

sociable con personas, a interactuar, y buscar una compañía de un network, entre diferentes personas. Y ahí fue cuando empezó mi nueva aventura, a sentirme que sí pertenecía aquí como un estudiante de TSU (Mayte, CCTS).

It was until 2016 that I started to adapt a little bit more, and the last of 2015, the last months of the spring semester of 2015. The reason was because in that I heard about McNair, and that was it, I can say that McNair was the first program after two years that gave me an opportunity to believe in myself, that made me feel that, yes, yes, I belonged here. So that program was the one that helped me a lot to become more, to be more sociable with people, to interact, and to look for a company from a network, between different people. And that's when my new adventure began, to feel that I belonged here as a student of TSU (Mayte, CCTS).

Although the current TRC model (Jain et al., 2011) does not have a way of exploring the social support that the four-year institution should have in place for community college transfer students, in order for them to succeed at an institution like TSU, we see that TSU has not nurtured a social environment where students like Mayte may feel reassured that they belong at an institution like TSU. For Mayte to be selected to be a part of the McNair Scholars Program at TSU, she had to put together an application that included a proposal, getting the support from a faculty member that would mentor her through the program, and lastly, she had to go through an interview. As a result of her participation, Mayte was able to utilize her social skills to interact with other students, develop relationships, and expand her social network. At the end not only did she feel that she belonged as a student at TSU, but last fall she graduated with her bilingual education degree.

Christian was one the students in this study who felt that he had no social life since his schedule as a civil engineering major his first semester did not allow much time to interact with other students. Christian used his navigational and social capitals (Yosso,

2005) to “culturally produce” (Levinson and Holland, 1996) the type of environment that would provide him with opportunities to develop his social network and learn more about the TSU campus community. Christian described this experience as:

Pretty much you know, just trial and error. If I saw a flyer on campus that said that a student organization was having a general meeting, I went to see if I liked it. Whenever a classmate of mine needed help in the homework or understanding something for the test, I would offer to help and that’s how I started to make friends. Once I had built trust with the people I helped and I considered them good friends, I started to ask for advice on where to go to eat, which student organizations to join, what professors to avoid, fastest way to get from a certain building in campus to another, etc.” (Christian. CCTS).

From our conversation, Christian also brought up the fact that he was not provided with the opportunity to join the Transfer Students Learning Communities (TSLC) that other students were able to enroll in. Christian would not have experienced this if there was consistent outreach being done by TSU. Not only would Christian have been connected with other incoming community college transfer students but he would also have been given opportunities to learn about the TSU campus community, while developing a sense of belonging at TSU. Since TSU did a poor job at this, Christian used his navigational capital (Yosso, 2005) in navigating different spaces on campus to try to find an organization and physical space where he felt comfortable. Christian used his social capital (Yosso, 2005) by developing relationships with his classmates while he tutored them in order to make friends and also to get a sense of how things worked at TSU, to be able to navigate this institution and make it work for him.

Vanessa was another student who described needing support in dealing with both being away from home to pursue a college education and the academic nature of an

institution like TSU. She shared that there were times when she missed her family since she grew up in a close knit Latino family where everyone was physically present and available to offer support instantly when she needed it. Additionally, Vanessa said that she struggled with being a full-time student and having to work part-time. To deal with this she used her social capital (Yosso, 2005) within her immediate family in order to “culturally produce” (Levinson and Holland, 1996) the social support that she didn’t receive at TSU. Vanessa shared:

My dad always talks to me about mental health and how important it is to take care of it. He helps me financially because he knows school takes up so much of my time, which limits how much I can work. He always tells me how proud he is of me and talks me down when I get upset or anxious. I know I can count on him in any way I need. My sisters support me by trying to include me in important things, even though I am away. Due to being out of town, I don’t get to see a lot of my niece’s and nephew’s performances on school nights so they FaceTime me and send me pictures and videos all of the time (Vanessa, CCTS).

From a TRC model (Jain, et al., 2011) Vanessa’s reflection shows the lack of support for Latina/o/x community college transfer students and their families by.... The institution lacks understanding that for some Latina/o/x community college transfer students, pursuing a university degree means leaving family behind. Moreover, family is important for Latina/o/x and as such TSU should create physical spaces where students and their families can come together in the university (Jain, et al., 2011). Additionally, there is a limited overall supportive financial and academic environment for Latina/o/x community college transfer students at TSU. Vanessa, should not have to choose to between her academics and her part-time job. Having funding specifically for community college transfer students, may eliminate some of these feelings and angst amongst Latina/o/x

community college transfer students at TSU. Vanessa's reflection also highlights the importance of the social capital families can provide in the lives of Latina/o/x students while they pursue a college degree. One of the most important ways in which Vanessa's family supported her was emotionally. Her dad did this by making sure he talked to her about her mental health and by reinforcing how proud he was of her pursuing a college degree. Her sisters did this by making sure that Vanessa continued to be included in special life events for her nieces and nephews. Vanessa also received financial support from her dad when she needed it. Overall these are the ways that Vanessa "culturally produces" (Levinson and Holland, 1996) the emotional and financial support to meet her needs and goals as a student at TSU.

Since TSU is a Predominantly White Institution (PWI), there were a few students who described feeling the need to be surrounded by more Latinas/os/xs. Yosdi and Lucia used their navigational capital (Yosso, 2005) in order to "culturally produce" (Levinson and Holland, 1996) the cultural spaces they needed to meet their social, emotional, cultural needs and goals. For example, Yosdi shared that she struggled in meeting other Latina/o/x students who were at TSU and that she decided to join a Latina sorority. She describes this as, "Yeah and it's hard to find just to find people that are Hispanic, I don't see a lot of people here. So, I'm just like, so that's why I joined, I applied to join the sorority" (Yosdi, CCTS). From a TRC model (Jain, et al., 2011) this is a good example of how TSU as an institution does poorly at acknowledging the lived experiences of their Latina/o/x community college transfer students, in this case students' cultural backgrounds. So far there is nothing that neither students or university personnel have

mentioned about celebrating Latino cultures, or how their transfer student programing celebrates students' cultural backgrounds. Similarly, Lucia shared that she was struggling with finding people who could relate to her experience as a Latina, first-generation college student. She was able to use her navigational capital (Yosso, 2005) to find out about and join BESO (Bilingual Education Student Organization), a student organization for students in the bilingual education program at TSU. She described her experience:

It's the Bilingual Ed organization for students. It was mostly education majors, I know the professor who lead the organization are education professors. So, I honestly, they give a lot of support. That's where I felt more like a culture thing because it was more of Hispanics and people who spoke your language and played your music and understood all the different things or where you come from or like how are your parents and I guess your family can react and things like that. It was an organization where people got together and spent some time together and played games and you know gave words of encouragement (Lucia, CCTS).

From a TRC model (Jain, et al., 2011) Lucia's reflection shows a lack of consideration and understanding from the part of the institution about the cultural challenges first-generation Latina/o/x community college transfer students may be experiencing as they transition into the university. This goes back to TSU's lack of consideration of Latina/o/x community college transfer student's lived experiences. As a result, Lucia looked for a space where her culture was celebrated by speaking her language, listening to her type of music, and most importantly, a space where she could identify with and speak about the realities of being a first-generation Latina/o/x college student. For Lucia, this space offered cultural nourishment, and encouragement for pursuing her goals; something that the transfer student programming was not able to do for her and others like her.

Another issue that arose with the participants in this study, was the lack of support for students with dependents. For example, Carina described the lack of support TSU provides undergraduate students like herself who are parents:

As far as being a mother, because it's something, that's not, you know a norm, they don't want people to get pregnant. If they have that support in school then, you know like. "oh we offer full daycare" then more people, maybe they feel like more people are going, I don't know, it's weird to say this. But they probably feel, like maybe, "oh it's going to be okay to have kids in college." So maybe, I feel like maybe that's why they don't acknowledge that, or don't offer help (Carina, CCTS).

During our conversation Carina shared that she looked for daycare at the university and they told her that they did not offer daycare for undergraduate students. Carina also shared that she found out that they do support graduate students at TSU with daycare. As a result, Carina and her husband Chendo had to use their social capital (Yosso, 2005) to "culturally produce" daycare for their son. As indicated earlier, Carina was at the university pursuing her degree while her son lived with Chendo in their hometown. While this helped save them money, in the longrun, it was costing them in the quality of relationship they had as a family. From a TRC model (Jain et al., 2011) the university should expand their current childcare services to include undergraduate parents and or create a separate daycare specifically for transfer students who arrive at TSU later in life and often are parents.

Lucia, who was her sister's legal guardian experienced minimal support by the university as well. She shared that since she had to move from her hometown to attend TSU, she had to live away from her sister. Without disclosing details, at one point during the middle of the semester something happened and Lucia needed to bring her sister to

live with her. She described the process she went through with the university in trying to find support:

So, I did try and look for I guess extra support before I moved back to Houston. I did try to go to TSU's legal services and ask them, you know, okay so if I were to bring my sister, how can I make that happen? Or can you guys suggest me to anyone around American City that is able to help me, live with my sister here or have more support economically or something like that you know. And I went to a few places but they weren't really, I guess supportive (Lucia, CCTS).

Lucia used her navigational capital (Yosso, 2005) by seeking out legal services offered to students at TSU to try and find information and resources that would support her bringing her sister to live with her. From a TRC model (Jain et al., 2011), the university again did a poor job at acknowledging the different family roles and responsibilities students like Lucia faced. From a TRC perspective, the university should and could take proactive approaches to learning and doing more to support Latina/o/x community college transfer students like Lucia, who as her sister's legal guardian, needed to have her close by to continue her studies at TSU. As a result of the lack of support from the university, Lucia used her navigational and aspirational capitals (Yosso, 2005) to move back to her hometown to be with her sister and simultaneously re-enroll at her former community college for one semester, and later transfer to the local university in Houston.

Given what I learned from this study about the different needs and the limited amount of support offered to Latina/o/x community college transfer students by TSU, I asked the university personnel in charge of transfer student programming to share the type of social support they provide their Latina/o/x community college transfer students. Citlali, Associate Director for New Student Services, mentioned that the best type of non-

academic support they offer their Latina/o/x community college transfer students was events throughout the year as part of their extended orientation programming, intended to reconnect students to services on campus. Jay who also coordinates the transfer student programing at TSU mentioned that aside from the transfer student programing already set in place, community college transfer students are further supported through the Transfer Experience Center. He shared:

We have a staff member there Wednesday and Thursday afternoons, to take in walk-in students to talk to them about their experience, connect them with resources, to walk them through some of the online tools, like the degree audit and the transfer equivalency tables (Jay, University Personnel).

The Transfer Experience Center (TEC) is a good indication of an institution practicing a TRC (Jain, et al., 2011), since it provides community college transfer students a central place on campus to access information and resources they may need to be successful. It is staffed with university personnel that is there to support transfer students in making sure they are on track to graduate. Even though the TEC exists, one of the challenges that Latina/o/x community college transfer students may be experiencing is not knowing it exists. None of the students who participated in this study mentioned it or seemed to know about it. Therefore, TSU may need to reconsider how it is promoting the TEC amongst its incoming community college transfer students. One of the reasons this may be occurring is that there may not be an incentive for Latina/o/x community college transfer students to want to visit the TEC. The TEC may therefore need to rethink how they want to promote the center and their services to Latina/o/x transfer students and

motivate them to use the center. In the following section I provide a summary of the findings of this chapter and the organization for chapter seven.

Summary of Findings and Conclusion

From the perspectives of the Latina/o/x community college transfer students most of the students are awarded financial aid in the form of grants and loans. Additionally, several students who had to make up for financial aid that they didn't receive either worked multiple jobs during their summer and winter breaks and saved the money and used it throughout the academic year, or worked part-time jobs during the academic year, and a few also relied on their family to support them financially when needed. This study shows that there is a limited amount of academic and social supportive environments to meet the needs and goals of Latina/o/x transfer students, including the needs of students with dependents. Finally, from the perspective of university personnel we learned that there is a limited number of scholarships for transfer students. In terms of academic support, two faculty shared how they are doing their best to provide an academic supportive environment for their Latina/o/x transfer students. As for academic advisors and from the coordinator of transfer student programming, we learned that the academic support they offer community college transfer students may be limited in how effective it can be in providing a supportive academic environment since the tutoring offered is modeled to serve the traditional college going population or it is modeled to refer students to other services on campus. Also, in terms of social supportive environment, the staff who is in charge of running the transfer student programming at TSU, provided good examples of how TSU is creating a supportive social environment for Latina/o/x transfer

students, which is mainly through providing events to reintroduce students to resources on campus and through the Transfer Experience Center. The challenge for both the academic and social supportive environments seems to be how to make them more culturally relevant in order to meet the specific needs of Latina/o/x transfer students.

The next chapter will explore the spaces/environments that Latina/o/x community college transfer students identified as receptive, unreceptive, and their favorite/most meaningful at TSU.

CHAPTER 7

Findings: Exploring the Spatial Transfer Receptive Culture

While Chapter 6 focused on discussing the findings from interviews with students and university personnel, describing how Latina/o/x community college transfer students and university personnel, culturally produce (Levinson and Holland, 1996) the post-enrollment transfer receptive culture for Latina/x/o community college transfer students at TSU. This chapter describes how Latina/o/x community college transfer students perceived the spatial transfer receptive culture for Latina/o/x community college transfer students at Transfer Student University. These particular findings derive from a total of **20** photos taken by seven of the student participants and their reflections about the photos they took. Although the study was guided by four main questions this chapter will focus on answering the following question;

What is the perceived transfer receptive culture by Latina/o/x community college transfer students at Transfer Student University?

Exploring Space on College Campuses

Looking at space through photographs provided by students is important because it can give the reader an opportunity to look at the social and physical elements of a students' campus environment, that may impact their educational experience and outcomes. As mentioned earlier Gonzalez (2002) explores elements of campus culture that prevent Chicano student persistence through college. His findings highlight three cultural systems of unequal representation which he describes as the social world, the physical world, and the epistemological world. Within the social world, participants

experienced marginalization and alienation as a result of a lack of Chicano representation among the students, staff, and faculty on campus, the lack of political power these groups possessed, and the lack of Spanish spoken on campus (p. 202). Additionally, within the physical world, participants continued to be marginalized and alienated due to the lack of Chicano representation in the architecture of the buildings, sculptures, banners, posters, and other physical symbols found on campus (p. 205). Finally, within the third element of the campus culture, the epistemological world, participants experienced marginalization and alienation as a result of, the lack of Chicano knowledge existing and being exchanged on campus (p. 207). In the following section I describe the theoretical framework I used to analyze the spatial transfer receptive culture at TSU.

Analysis and Interpretation

To analyze the spatial transfer receptive culture for Latina/o/x community college transfer students at TSU, I applied Solórzano and Velez's (2016) Critical Race Spatial Analysis (CRSA). CRSA looks at how structural and institutional factors divide, constrict, and construct space to impact the educational experiences and opportunities to students based on race (Solórzano and Velez, p. 430). Further, photos provided by students were initially grouped based on keywords students provided within the descriptions that were attached to each photo. This chapter will be organized in four parts: receptive spaces/environments at TSU, unreceptive spaces/environments at TSU, favorite/most meaningful spaces/environments at TSU, and a chapter summary with conclusions.

TSU Context

To further understand why students may have selected the spaces/environments that are represented in the following sections, I would like to provide some context on the campus culture based on the authors 2014 study. The study which took place at TSU, highlighted examples of the ideological conditions Latina/o/x community college transfer students confronted while enrolled at TSU. For the purposes of this study, the following are excerpts taken from the university's newspaper published in the Spring of 2014.

The following statements were provided by a TSU student who was interviewed for this story, from the information provided this student was in the top 10% of his graduating class, when he was admitted to TSU. He states, "students who were admitted to TSU straight out of high school may feel that transfer students, specifically those from community colleges, got to TSU by circumventing the traditional barriers to admission" (See Footnote)⁹. The attitude reflected in the students comment suggests that community college students who transfer to TSU, somehow bypass traditional admission barriers. The student also says "people who transfer from community colleges don't have to work as hard, and they get admitted to TSU more easily" (See Footnote)¹⁰. In this comment the student claims that students who transfer from a community college do not have to work hard to transfer to TSU. Finally, the student said, "the University would do well to control the number of students that transfer to the University each semester with stricter transfer admissions guidelines" (See Footnote)¹¹. In this final comment, the suggests that the university would do a good by controlling the number of students who transfer to TSU by implementing stricter transfer admission guidelines. With the messages communicated to students during transfer orientation, devaluing the community college

and students academic abilities and with attitudes expressed by the student statements, Latina/o/x community college transfer students may feel out of place, unsupported, unwelcomed, and unmotivated to learn. Together these messages and attitudes contribute to the ideological conditions Latina/o/x community college transfer students confront at TSU. As a result this may influence the types of spaces/environments they spend time in. The following sections describe what Latina/o/x transfer students consider to be their receptive, unreceptive, and favorite/most meaningful spaces/environments at TSU.

Receptive Spaces/Environments at TSU

Out of the seven students who provided photos to describe the spatial transfer receptive culture for Latina/o/x community college transfer students at TSU, only Christian, Daniel, and Yosdi, provided their definitions of what a receptive/unreceptive campus space/environment was to them. Student descriptions of what a receptive campus space/environment was generally represented by Christian's definition of what a receptive space/environment means to him, he describes receptive as, "a place where you can go in and you feel welcome. No one will be judging you because of your ethnicity, race, religion, skin color, etc. People will treat you in a friendly manner" (Christian, CCTS).

Students photos and reflections about the receptive spaces/environments they identified on campus describe receptive spaces/environments as places where they can exercise/play sports, study, relax and feel happy, or feel taken care of. For example, Christian identified one of the campus's gym as his receptive space/environment. For his photo Christian took picture 1, which shows the outside of the basketball gym, he

described the receptive aspect of the space/environment of the gym as, “the physical environment is very friendly, lots of open spaces, plenty of courts to play basketball, volleyball, indoor soccer, bouldering, racquetball. The work out facilities of gym are also very appealing to any TSU student who desires to workout” (Christian, CCTS). From the definition on receptive spaces/environment that the students provided above Christian’s example of the gym as a receptive space is receptive based on how he describes the physical environment as being comfortable based on having a lot of open spaces and plenty of courts to engage in different types of sports and indoor activities. Furthermore, Christian described this space/environment receptive highlighting some of the people characteristics that make the gym a receptive space/environment for him saying that;

“the people here are super friendly. One can go into the gym without knowing a single person and come out with a group of friends that will invite you to play basketball or volleyball whenever they are free. If you go to work out, the people at the gym will help you out if you need guidance or help using a machine and the personal trainers are very friendly” (Christian, CCTS).

Christian’s description of people’s characteristics at the gym make it a receptive space/environment because as a Latino male with a brown complexion, Christian feels welcomed because he is comfortable interacting with other gym goers and developing relationships, that may lead to friendships. Also, from a CRSA framework Christian may consider the gym as a receptive space/environment because race does not seem to be an issue. This allows the gym to be a space/environment for Christian created for leisure where he doesn’t have to think about him being a Latino male and how this may be perceived.



Photo 1: Gym

Alejandra, Cruz, and Daniel, described their receptive space/environment in the form of a place on campus where it was comfortable to be in. Alejandra, provided the picture on the left. As a speech language pathology major, Alejandra chose picture 2, a lounge area in the Department of Communication Sciences & Disorders, as her receptive space/environment. This is the department where her major is housed in. She described this as a receptive space/environment for her saying that, “I really enjoy this place because it is a very quiet place and it is receptive because I feel very comfortable” (Alejandra, CCTS). As a speech language pathology major feeling comfortable in the Department of Communication Sciences & Disorders, may further support Alejandra in tapping into the resources offered by her department to continue to succeed at the personal, academic, and professional levels, as a Latina community college transfer student at TSU.



Photo 2: Department of Communication Sciences & Disorders



Photo 3: Inside of department/ office

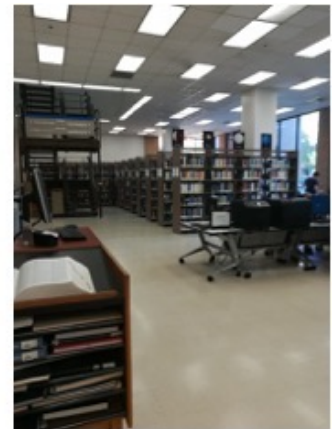


Photo 4: Library

Cruz provided the photo 3, he chose to represent a receptive space/environment with a photo of the inside of a department/office, that provides students a place where they can study or socialize in a comfortable and quiet way. Cruz describes this space/environment as receptive by saying that. “as an introvert, the quietness and comfort of this space makes it ideal to work on school work. [...] When there is people in this space, they are very respectful. It is a place where people can come to relax” (Cruz, CCTS). For Cruz this space/environment is receptive because for someone who is shy and keeps to himself, it allows him to be himself, be in an environment with other students, and focus on school work. Lastly, Daniel provided picture 4, his photo represents a receptive space/environment with a photo of a library. He described the library as a receptive space/environment because, “this is a receptive environment because it is a library that has open tables to study and also a quiet study section. The people are very quiet and studious, it motivates me to study more and enjoy it” (Daniel, CCTS). The library is a welcoming space for Daniel because both the physical and non-physical characteristics of this space allow him to be himself while motivating him to

study, providing him with a feeling of self-satisfaction. For Alejandra, Cruz, and Daniel, is interesting that all three described pretty much secluded spaces/environments, where its quiet and where people would be less inclined to bother them. From a CRSA framework, these seem to be places where race is not an issue and places where students have constructed as spaces/environments to get their school work done.

On the other hand, Ismael and Mayté identified spaces/environments on campus where people can walk and enjoy the different spaces on campus that are surrounded by the natural aspects of campus. Ismael provided picture 5 saying, “the receptive photo is the one in the West Mall” (Ismael, CCTS). Ismael’s photo shows a part of campus that is always active, since it is one of the main access points for students and visitors that come to campus.



Photo 5: West Mall

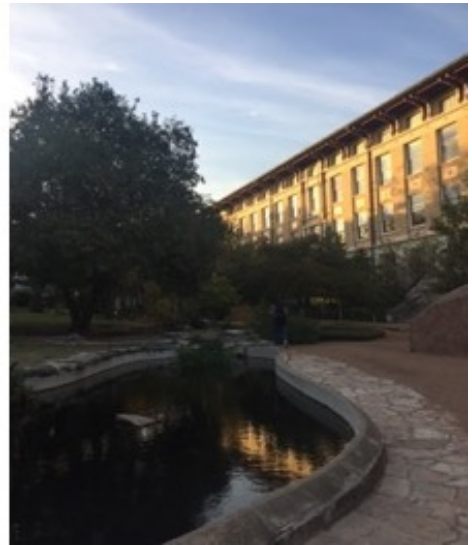


Photo 6: Turtle Pond

Mayté provided photo 6, she represents a receptive space/environment with a photo of the turtle pond on campus. She describes the turtle pond as receptive saying that,

“I love nature, and when I saw the Turtle Pond, I really liked to come here because it made me feel relaxed and happy” (Mayté, CCTS). For Mayté, this space/environment is welcoming because the surroundings including the turtles, that allow her to relax and feel happy. Mayté also shared that other students make the turtle pond a receptive space/environment saying that, “well I see other students come here to study and observe the turtles. This made me think they liked this space as much as I do. I could also walk and see the trees and flowers around the Turtle Pond” (Mayté, CCTS). Mayté’s observations regarding other students studying and looking at the turtles, also makes it a welcoming place, seeing how they are all engaging in the same activity in a friendly manner. From a CRSA framework, this space/environment may be receptive at least to Mayté because the turtle pond and its surroundings to an extent provide features from the university that do not involve race. This allows Mayté to have a place where she can go to relax and be happy.

Finally, Yosdi provided photo 7, which represents the International Office to represent her receptive space/environment. As an undocumented student who is protected under the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), Yosdi describes the International Office as being a receptive space/environment for her saying that, “this office takes care of me as an immigrant and is very accepting to where I am from. I know I can trust the administration inside this building because they have shown me that even though I am a DACA student I can still make it in college” (Yosdi, CCTS). For Yosdi, the International Office on campus is a welcoming space on campus because this is a space where she is humanized, accepted, protected, and encouraged to continue pursuing

her college education. This is important at a Predominantly White Institution where there have been anti-immigrant incidents against students like Yosdi. From a CRSA, framework this is a space for students like Yosdi that have been created on campus because of race and in particular immigration status. The international office to an extent ensures that students regardless of race and immigration status, are protected, are informed of their rights and responsibilities, and have the resources needed to have one less thing to worry about when trying to be a student.



Photo 7: International Office

Unreceptive Spaces/Environments at TSU

Out of the seven students who provided photos representing an unreceptive space/environment on campus, Alejandra and Mayté, did not submit a photo of an unreceptive space/environment on campus. Again, only Christian, Daniel, and Yosdi,

provided their definitions of what an unreceptive space/environment meant to them. Daniel's definition is generally representative of their definition of an unreceptive space/environment. Daniel defines an unreceptive space/environment as, "somewhere I do not feel that I can be myself or I have to change myself to the environment where I am in a way that makes me feel uncomfortable" (Daniel, CCTS). Student descriptions of what an unreceptive campus space/environment generally described an unreceptive space/environment in two main ways; first as a space/environment where they can't practice their culture or a place their culture is not represented. Second, a space/environment where they felt excluded because of their identity as a community college transfer student, the nature of exclusivity in their academic department, or the different perceived privileges that come with social class status.

The pictures below were provided by Ismael and Yosdi, both photos represent a lecture hall/classroom at TSU, Ismael provided photo 8 and added, "the unreceptive one is in the lecture hall" (Ismael, CCTS). From the picture provided by Ismael, there may be various reasons why he would feel that this place is unreceptive. It can be the fact that he may not see students that look like him or who share similar lived experiences as a Latino community college transfer student. It can also be the nature of a large lecture hall that size, the way that its set up making it more challenging to interact with other students, or not having a direct connection with the professor. This contrast what a classroom may look like at his former community college where more students may look like him and shared similar experiences, classrooms may be smaller, there are more opportunities to interact with other students, including having direct communication with the professor.



Photo 8: Lecture Hall



Photo 9: Classroom

Yosdi provided picture 9, she represents an unreceptive space/environment with an empty classroom in which she was taking a class. Yosdi, describes the classroom as an unreceptive space/environment saying,

“I took a picture of a random classroom that I attend. The reason I chose this is because there nothing about this space shows any type of culture. [...] The people in all my classrooms are almost all White, there is not a lot of Hispanic people. The majority of the day I have to speak English when sometimes I want to speak Spanish. English is my second language and sometimes it is hard to have a conversation with someone” (Yosdi, CCTS).

For Yosdi, the classroom represents an unreceptive space/environment for multiple reasons. First, she describes her classrooms as spaces/environments without culture, mainly because they are made up of predominantly White students. This automatically places her in a space/environment where she may not feel comfortable being herself. Second, she mentions having to speak English rather than Spanish, making it challenging to be herself and at the same time making a challenge to being able to effectively communicate with other students. This speaks to the subtractive element of education

(Valenzuela, 1999), seeing that her professors and peers, do not provide her with a learning space/environment where she can use her bilingualism to support her learning. From a CRSA framework, this type of classroom which is made up of predominantly White students has the potential to become a space/environment where Yosdi's ideas and experiences may be invalidated in favor of students who make up the majority of the class. Also, since Yosdi may be one of a few students of color, this situation may lead to Yosdi becoming the spokesperson for the Latino community, thus adding to the unreceptiveness of the classroom. As a result, the classroom may turn into a space/environment not conducive to Yosdi's learning and overall development as a student.

For Cruz, Christian, and Daniel, an unreceptive space/environment is represented by a place where they feel excluded because of how they perceive people in these spaces and/or how they feel people may perceive them. For example, Cruz provided pictures 10 and 11, representing one of multiple Starbucks's located on the TSU campus. Cruz describes this space/environment as being unreceptive to him saying:

“the unfamiliarity with this type of environment makes it unreceptive. In my opinion, this environment tries to give comfort to the students, but for me, it is too much comfort. [...] Being around people who are not engineers feels not very receptive. The difference in financial status between me and those who appear to be relatively wealthy causes a sense of unreceptiveness” (Cruz, CCTS).

Cruz's representation of an unreceptive space/environment has to do with being in a space/environment that is not surrounded by his engineering peers and the discomfort he may feel in not being able to relate to them, therefore not feeling comfortable in being himself. Additionally, there is a perceived difference in social class status, during our

conversations he shared that one of the reasons why he felt this space/environment was unreceptive was because he perceived that people who bought Starbucks coffee on a daily basis, were people who were in a position to waste their money and therefore were in a better financial situation. As someone who identifies as a working-class first-generation college student, this made this space/environment unreceptive.



Photo 10 and 11: Starbucks

Christian provided photo 12, this picture is of the School of Business and represents an unreceptive space/environment for him. Christian describes this place as being unreceptive:

The people around this environment have an air of being very privileged, high class, and unique. It is unlikely to make new friends if you tell upper division business majors that you are a transfer student from a community college. It is as if they deem that to be demeaning and inferior (Christian, CCTS).

In his reflection about why the school of business represents an unreceptive space/environment Christian, describes two key characteristics that make this an unreceptive space/environment for him. First, he describes the appearance of this space/environment as a space/environment with privilege and high class. As a Latino

international student with a brown complexion, it may be more challenging for him to navigate a space like the school of business, without feeling some type of discomfort. Additionally, Christian also describes the possibility of having a different experience in this space/environment if students disclose their status as a community college transfer student. This speaks to the idea that a community college is a less competitive school than a four-year university, therefore students who transfer from a community college and their skills, abilities, knowledge, and lived experiences, are automatically devalued.



Photo 12: School of Business

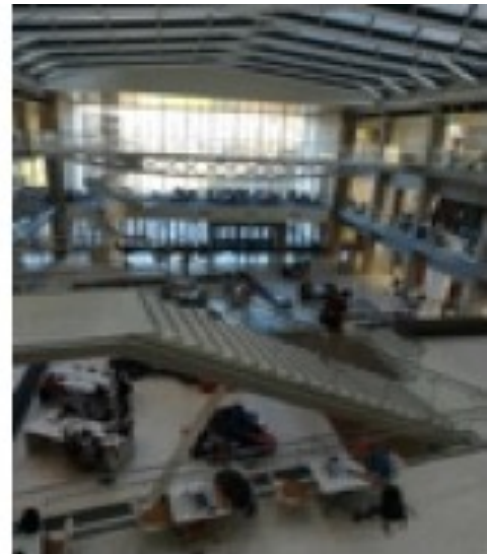


Photo 13: Engineering Education and Research Center

Lastly, Daniel provided picture 13, he represents the “Engineering Education and Research Center,” as an unreceptive space/environment. He describes feeling unreceptive in this place as:

I feel unreceptive here because after a certain hour, the building is locked, and only electrical engineering students can unlock the doors using their ID’s. It is meant to be a general engineering building, but I feel excluded even though I am an engineering student. The people in this environment are generally receptive; however, I have encountered some people in the student centers that seem

unreceptive and almost annoyed. I do believe that it may just be their personality, but some don't seem welcoming" (Daniel, CCTS).

Even though Daniel is supposed to feel welcomed in the engineering spaces/environments, he describes feeling that a certain level of surveillance is imposed on him making him feel excluded from his own academic department. Additionally, he describes interacting with some people in this space/environment that may make him feel that he can't be himself leading him to feel uncomfortable. Looking at the unreceptive spaces/environments that Cruz, Christian, and Daniel from a CRSA framework, there is definitely an element of "race" that they describe experiencing either directly or indirectly that has impacted their experience. For Cruz and Christian, is this feeling of feeling less or being devalued based on identifying as a working-class student or coming from a community college, For Daniel, his experience indirectly involves race, in this case, there exists an element of surveillance and monitoring who comes in and out of this space/environment. This leads to a few questions, who is the university trying to keep out of these spaces? What resources is the university trying to keep away from students? As a result, Cruz, Christian, and Daniel's, feelings about these specific spaces may influence whether they visit or spend time in these social gathering places or academic departments. Further, this contributes to whether these students have a positive or negative university and educational experience.

Favorite/Most Meaningful Spaces/Environments at TSU

Mayté, Alejandra, and Yosdi, represent their favorite/most meaningful space on campus as a space that symbolizes a personal accomplishment. For example, Mayté, who

provided picture 14, described walking to the university tower as her favorite/most meaningful space/environment on campus. She said:

“The most meaningful space on campus was to walk towards the University-Tower. Going to the tower was very important to me because it constantly reminded me why I came to TSU for. It was like a challenge to me, but at the same time was like a dream come true. [...] The people that work inside of the University-Tower, for example, Mr. David was always very nice and kind person. I would also like to go inside of the tower because it was very nice and helpful to receive feedback and advice from Mr. David. He would always have a smile in his face that could make a person forget his/her problems for the day” (Mayté, CCTS).

For Mayté the university tower was her favorite/most meaningful space/environment on campus to walk to because it was a reminder of the challenges she had to overcome to be able to attend TSU. As a community college transfer student, Mayté was at the community college for six years before she was able to transfer. Once at TSU Mayté endured personal, academic, and social challenges until graduating in the fall of 2017. Mayté also describes the university tower as being her favorite/most meaningful space/environment on campus because of Mr. David, whom she met during TSU’s first visit to her community college, during the college fair she co-organized. Since then Mr. David, became part of her network of people who supported her.

Alejandra, who provided the photo 15, described her favorite/most meaningful space/environment as the university tower. She shared that the university tower was her favorite/most meaningful space/environment on campus saying, “this place is meaningful to me because three years ago when I looked at University tower, I always said, “Soon I will be close to the tower but no as a tourist-I will be looking at the University tower as a student and here I am looking at it as a TSU student” (Alejandra, CCTS). For Alejandra,

the university tower is meaningful because a few years ago she was just a visitor and now she is a student, for Alejandra this is an example of accomplishing a personal goal.



Photo 14: University Tower

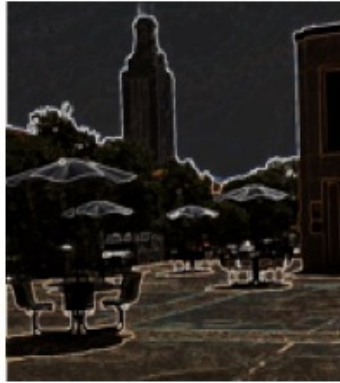


Photo 15: University Tower



Photo 16: Central Campus

Finally, Yosdi provided photo 16, her favorite/most meaningful space/environment on campus is represented by a central part on campus. Her photo shows a water fountain that is centrally located overlooking the university tower and the central part of campus. Additionally, the fountain is located near an intersection where students and visitors can walk on and off campus at any time. Yosdi, describe why this is her favorite/most meaningful space/environment saying:

“Everything about this picture defines why this is my favorite place. This school is the most beautiful school I have ever seen and every day I am so grateful because I got accepted. [...] When I walk through here there are so many students going to class and although my classes are almost all white kids, walking through

here I can see the diversity. Although I only see a few Hispanic people, at least I know they are there” (Yosdi, CCTS).

For Yosdi, this space is her favorite place on campus for two reasons, first, it describes a sense of personal accomplishment and gratefulness in being admitted to a university like TSU, especially after having self-doubt and being discouraged to apply to TSU. Second, as she mentioned earlier she described her classrooms as being absent of “culture” since her classes are predominantly made up of White students. This is the space/environment on campus where she sees more Latina/o/x students, people who may share similar backgrounds, and who may also like to speak Spanish rather than English. Also, from a CRSA point of view, this is one of the places on campus at least for Yosdi, where race is represented in a positive way. The fountain is a place on campus that Yosdi has created for herself to see that she is represented in this predominantly White space.

On the other hand, Christian provided photo 17, and identified the engineering buildings to represent his favorite/meaningful space on campus. He explained:

“The laboratories, 3D printing machines, computer labs with advanced engineering and statistical analysis software, engineering organization offices, green open spaces and tons of empty classrooms to study and do homework make this my favorite place on campus. I was able to become a tutor by simply offering to help my friends in their homework, and the facilities at the engineering department were really helpful. I also work in research with many of my friends and we are constantly required to go into the laboratory and break concrete, or asphalt slabs which in on itself is really cool” (Christian, CCTS).

For Christian the engineering buildings are his favorite places on campus because it seems that he has been able to use these spaces to support his transition and integration into the university, as a community college transfer student. Christian, was one of the students who described having challenges in finding groups and organizations that could

support his academic and social interests. From his description we can see that he has become more integrated into the university as a result of being actively involved in these spaces. Additionally, Christian described the people in these spaces as:

“The people who are doing engineering don’t care what your background is, where you are from, or your physical appearance. They mostly value how good a friend you are and how smart and organized you can be. I have told many of my friends of how I transferred from a community college to TSU and most of them are really proud of my achievement and encourage me to keep moving forward. All of the people that I have met in engineering are also amazing networking contacts” (Christian, CCTS).

For Christian these spaces have also been spaces where he feels accepted for who he is, a Latino male community college transfer student. He is one of a few students who has brought up his perceived differential treatment of community college transfer students within different spaces and environments. In a sense he also feels validated when in these spaces surrounded by these type of people. Additionally, it seems like these are people that Christian may be able to build long-lasting relationships and with them build his social network. From a CRSA framework, for Christian, this space/environment is a place where race doesn’t come up. Additionally, it seems that the engineering buildings have become a place Christian has created where he has thrive academically and socially, making this a positive educational experience.



Photo 17: Engineering Building

Finally, Cruz, Ismael, and Daniel, provided pictures of open green spaces where students can engage in different type of recreational activities. Cruz, provided picture 18, chose one of the fields to represent his favorite/meaningful space on campus. He shared that the reason this was his favorite/most meaningful space on campus was, “the activities that are carried out, specially soccer. [...] The people that come out to play are very friendly and are enjoying the same activity that you are. Working as a team with strangers is most of the time a fun thing to do” (Cruz, CCTS). Having the opportunity to get to know Cruz outside of our conversations for this project, I can say that the field and playing soccer is one of the things that allows Cruz to balance his academic responsibilities as a Mechanical Engineering major and at the same time, provide him a space to interact with people doing something he really enjoys. Playing soccer allows him to open up and socialize with others even if its just for a few hours a week. Ismael, on the

other hand, shared picture 19 that represents a green open space in the middle of the architecture building and a museum on campus, saying, “my favorite spot is next to the architecture building and the museum” (Ismael, CCTS). Although he did not provide too much insight into why this space/environment was his favorite space/environment, from the conversations we have had, I know that Ismael is outgoing and social and I can perceive him using this space to engage in social activities.



Photo 18: Field



Photo 19: Next to the architecture building and the museum

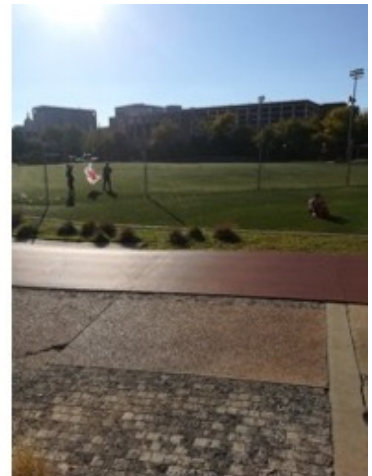


Photo 20: Field

Finally, Daniel shared picture 20, representing the same field as Cruz. He said this space is the most meaningful to him because,

“this is the field, it is most meaningful to me because it allows for anyone to come and play any sport they’d like. It is open to anyone throughout the entire day. Mainly, I love this place because there is always a soccer pick-up game going on that you can join even if everyone is a stranger. [...] The people in this environment are very welcoming and it almost seems like every person you meet has a smile on their face that you can make friends with. Many people here are international students, they have different backgrounds and I relate to them while sharing our love for soccer” (Daniel, CCTS).

For Daniel the field is the total opposite than the “Engineering Education and Research Center,” a space/environment where he felt like he is being monitored, excluded, and couldn’t be himself, even in a space/environment where he had the right to be in as an engineering major. The field as he describes is open to anyone throughout the entire day, so he does not have to worry about being locked out, using his ID, or feeling excluded. On the contrary this is a space/environment where Daniel can be himself, while developing friendships with others playing the game he loves. Further, from a CRSA framework, the field which is the space that Cruz and Daniel describe as their favorite/most meaningful, has the potential to bring people from different races/racial backgrounds together for the love of sports, in this case being soccer. Soccer is something that they both describe doing while forming teams with strangers and working towards a common goal. This has the potential of crossing racial and class boundaries that were represented throughout the different examples earlier. As a result, these experiences made Cruz and Daniel’s experience at TSU better.

Summary of Findings and Conclusions

The goal of this chapter was to understand student’s perceptions of the spatial transfer receptive culture for Latina/o/x community college transfer students at TSU. Students were asked to engage in a two-part photo collection activity. The first part asked students to describe what their own definition of receptive and unreceptive campus spaces/environments were. The second part of this activity asked students to provide a total of three photos and answer a few questions that described a space/environment that was receptive, unreceptive, and their favorite/most meaningful space/environment on

campus. Findings revealed that students generally defined a receptive space/environment as, “a place where you can go in and you feel welcome. No one will be judging you because of your ethnicity, race, religion, skin color, etc. People will treat you in a friendly manner” (Christian, CCTS). Receptive spaces/environments were generally represented by places that were friendly like the gym. Places that were quiet where people could relax or be motivated to do school work, like the lounge area in the Department of Communications Sciences & Disorders, the library, places where students could interact with nature like the turtle pond, or places that were safe and accepting of DACA students, like the international office. From a CRSA framework, it is clear that for the majority of the participants who provided photos of receptive spaces/environments, that race was not directly an issue that impacted them, with the exception of Yosdi. Given her status as a DACA student, Yosdi identified the international office at TSU as a receptive space, where she felt safe. Given the current political conditions and the history of anti-immigrant culture at TSU, the international office can be seen as a place on campus that has been created as a result of the students representing different races and citizen statuses.

Unreceptive spaces/environments were generally defined by students as, “somewhere I do not feel that I can be myself or I have to change myself to the environment where I am in a way that makes me feel uncomfortable” (Daniel, CCTS). Unreceptive spaces/environments were generally represented by spaces where students did not see their culture represented, like in classrooms. Where the perceived differences in social class in spaces like Starbucks, made students feel uncomfortable. Where places

like the school of business or the centers, made students feel devalued or excluded. From a CRSA framework, photos and reflections provided by students describe unreceptive spaces/environments where race directly or indirectly played a role in student perceptions of these spaces. This was evident in the classroom that Yosdi described, where the majority of her peers were White students and the where the predominant language in which students learned was in English. For Cruz, Christian, and Daniel, race was manifested in more indirect ways such as in perceived class differences or feeling excluded from your own academic department by their security mechanisms.

Finally, for some students their favorite/most meaningful spaces/environments on campus represented overcoming challenges, personal accomplishments, and representation of people who looked like them and who participated in this project. For one student it was a place where he felt accepted and valued for who he represented as a Latino community college transfer student and where he was able to thrive academically and socially. Finally, for the last group of students their favorite place was the field, where they could open up, be themselves, interact with other people, and play the game they love. From a CRSA perspective, there were spaces/environments at TSU where race was represented in positive ways. For Yosdi, it was walking by the intersection near the water fountain, where she saw people like her represented. For Christian, it was in the engineering buildings where he was able to collaborate with others regardless of race, and in the process create a positive academic and social environment. Finally, for Cruz and Daniel, it was the field where they crossed racial boundaries and played for the love of soccer. Overall, the findings in this chapter can be used by faculty, staff, and

administrators at TSU to support the creation and long-term sustainability of more culturally relevant and culturally sustaining spaces for Latina/o/x community college transfer students, a commitment to develop these type of spaces/environments, a commitment to creating more receptive spaces/environments at TSU is critical to the academic, social, and personal successes of Latina/o/x community college transfer students.

As the researcher, these photos provided me with a new sense of awareness of what the ideological, material, and structural conditions Latina/o/x community college transfer students confront in social and physical spaces. Photos were a powerful way to look at the social and physical spaces where students choose or choose not to visit and spend their time in and how these spaces/environments impact their educational experiences as community college transfer students. What these photos reveal about the transfer receptive culture for Latina/o/x community college transfer students at TSU, is that the university needs to create more culturally responsive spaces where Latina/o/x students see themselves and their culture represented, where Latina/o/x students feel safe and protected, and spaces that nurture building relationships across race, class, gender, socio-economic status, immigration status and other identities students identify with that have excluded them in the past. In terms of cultural production of the transfer receptive culture the photos revealed the spaces/environments students have created to be able to succeed academically and socially. Additionally, photos provided by students also reveal how students navigate unreceptive spaces, meaning they show the spaces students may avoid visiting and spending time in. In the same token, photos also reveal

spaces/environments students engage in different activities that provide a sense of success, joy, and happiness. Overall, the photos provided by students help us better understand the ideological, material, and structural conditions that Latina/o/x transfer students experience and confront in social and physical spaces at a PWI.

The following chapter describes the overall conclusions, contributions, and directions for future research.

CHAPTER 8

Conclusion

Overall Conclusion

This study explored the how Latina/o/x community college transfer students apply their community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005) to navigate and engage in the “culturally production” (Levinson and Holland, 1996) of the transfer receptive culture (Jain, et al., 2011), at TSU, a Predominantly White Institution in Texas. This study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What is the perceived transfer receptive culture by Latina/o/x community college transfer students at Transfer Student University?
2. How do Latina/o/x/ community college transfer students navigate and engage in the cultural production of the transfer receptive culture for Latina/o/x community college transfer students at Transfer Student University?
3. What is the perceived transfer receptive culture for Latina/o/x community college transfer students by faculty, staff, and administrators, who work with and on behalf of community college transfer students at Transfer Student University?
4. How do faculty, staff, and administrators, who work with and on behalf of community college transfer students engage in the cultural production of the transfer receptive culture for Latina/o/x community college transfer students at Transfer Student University?

This chapter will address each of the questions that guided the study and will include the following four sections: Culturally Producing the Pre-Application Transfer Receptive Culture, Culturally Producing the Post-Admissions Transfer Receptive Culture, Culturally Producing the Post-Enrollment Transfer Receptive Culture, and Exploring the Spatial Transfer Receptive Culture. Overall, the study finds that even though Transfer Student University, has transfer policies and practices set in place to support community college transfer students, these policies and practices are not culturally responsive to meet the specific needs of Latina/o/x transfer students. As a result, Latina/o/x students responded to these conditions according to their individual interactions and experiences with the university and according to their own specific needs and goals as Latina/o/x community college transfer students. There were two ways students used their CCW (Yosso, 2005) to confront these conditions. First, students acted individually and used their CCW, to gain the information and resources they needed in order to meet their specific needs. Second, students engaged others in “culturally producing” (Levinson and Holland, 1996) the information and resources they needed to meet their specific needs and goals, as Latina/o/x community college transfer students.

Culturally Producing the Pre-Application Transfer Receptive Culture

During the pre-application stage of the transfer process prospective Latina/o/x community college transfer students experienced a limited amount of direct outreach by TSU. As a result, students used their navigational and social capitals (Yosso, 2005) to “culturally produce” (Levinson and Holland, 1996) the pre-application receptive culture. For example, students “culturally produced” the direct outreach that they were not getting

from TSU, by calling TSU's admissions office or going directly to TSU's admissions office themselves to speak with someone in person. These agentic acts resulted in students gaining the information and resources they needed to increase their opportunity to be admitted and transfer to TSU. Furthermore, since students revealed that TSU did not provide them with specific information and resources in order to successfully become eligible to apply, students relied on their aspirational, navigational, and social capitals (Yosso, 2005) to "culturally produce" (Levinson and Holland, 1996) the pre-application transfer receptive culture, in order to become transfer eligible, apply, and gain transfer admissions to Transfer Student University. This included students learning about the transfer process, the application process, required courses for their major, and financial aid information and resources.

From the perspectives provided by administrators and staff at TSU, findings show that the pre-admissions TRC for Latina/o/x community college transfer students at TSU is limited. Although there are some offices participating in direct outreach at community colleges, there are no concrete examples on how their outreach efforts are adapted to meet the specific needs of aspiring Latina/o/x community college transfer students. Finally, although there is some outreach being done by TSU at the community colleges, the outreach efforts do not seem to be shared by TSU as an institution. Instead it seems that each office is providing their own outreach.

Culturally Producing the Post-Admissions Transfer Receptive Culture

Once students were admitted to TSU, the university had limited communication with community college transfer students. The main communication students received

from the university was the generic admissions email with instructions on next steps, including registering for orientation. Only Christian shared that he received a direct email from the student advisor for civil engineers, to make sure he signed up for orientation. Additionally, two of the challenges and sources of concern for Latina/o/x community college transfer students at TSU, were securing housing and a financial aid package that met their specific needs. Further, only eight out of ten students who participated in this study, attended a transfer student orientation. Students who participated in a transfer student orientation, generally said that this was the event where they received information and resources available to them at TSU as community college transfer students. Two students Lucia and Cruz shared that they experienced certain events and activities during orientation where they received messages, that TSU was going to be more challenging than the community colleges they came from because TSU was at a higher level. This caused Lucia and Cruz to develop a sense of not belonging, fear, and unnecessary stress and anxiety. In the end Latina/o/x community college transfer students used their previous knowledge along with their familial, navigational, and social capitals (Yosso, 2005), to “culturally produce” (Levinson and Holland, 1996) the information and resources needed due to the limited direct outreach by TSU post admissions, including information on and securing housing, the financial aid application process, and orientation.

In terms of how TSU engages and supports incoming Latina/o/x c community college transfer students, findings show that there is extensive transfer programming and dedicated administrators and student staff that directly work with transfer students. For

example, New Student Services (NSS), has implemented a deferment process to pay for orientation for students that may not be able to pay for it at the time of registering for orientation. This allows students to register and attend orientation and once they meet with their advisor enroll in their courses. Additionally, NSS is using their institutional position at the university to partner with different schools, departments, and programs to monitor student enrollment in high demand courses; thus, NSS provides Latina/o/x community college students more opportunities to enroll in their upper-division major courses. Findings also show, that NSS offers Latina/o/x support and the opportunity to stay engaged during and after transfer student orientation. For example, during the one and a half day orientation students are exposed to the most critical information and resources available to them as transfer students at TSU. After transfer student orientation they are reintroduced to resources on campus through what they describe as, extended orientation events and activities.

In addition, findings show, that Latina/o/x community college transfer students may be able to receive additional support through the First Year Transfer Program (FYTP). The FYTP offers community college transfer students the opportunity to participate in TSLC's, which are small learning communities where groups of 15 to 20 students take two to three courses together, meet once a week in their small groups with a peer mentor, who is a transfer student as well and in their same department or college, and with a facilitator who is an academic advisor from their department or college. Additionally, in the spring semester, community college transfer students are eligible to sign up for a signature course specifically designed for transfer students in mind, and

finally through the FYTP, community college transfer students have the opportunity to join the “Transfer Students” student organization and access mentors there as well.

Finally, findings show that academic advising in the College of Liberal Arts (COLA) at TSU, engages incoming community college transfer students during orientation and beyond. From the perspective of COLA, community college students attending orientation meet with an academic advisor in their major. Initial appointments are brief lasting 15 minutes, but academic advisors schedule a follow up advising appointment with their students before classes start or early in the semester.

From the perspectives of Latina/o/x community college transfer students it seems that due to the limited amount of direct outreach by TSU, students continue to use their community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005) to “culturally produce” (Levinson and Holland, 1996) the post-admission transfer receptive culture (Jain, et al, 2011), up until they attend their orientation. However, from the perspective of TSU administrators and staff, they seem to believe they have the institutional mechanisms set in place so that once admitted Latina/o/x will not face as many challenges in registering for orientation and or enrolling for impacted courses. Additionally, it seems that in the last three years their general transfer programming and support services have dramatically improved. However, there continues to be a limited amount of culturally responsive programming and resources to meet the needs that may directly affect Latina/o/x community college transfer students at TSU, especially in making sure that students secure financial aid and housing that meets their needs, during the post-admission process. For example, the majority of the participants in this study were awarded financial aid packages that were mainly made up

of loans. There is no loan-free financial aid or scholarships that specifically supports the financial needs of Latina/o/x transfer students. Additionally, TSU currently strictly offers guaranteed housing for first time in college freshmen students, leaving community college transfer students to look for and secure housing on their own. For Latina/o/x transfer students finding affordable housing near the university may be a challenge specially for students who are in domestic partnerships, married, married with children, or who are legally responsible for siblings or family members.

Culturally Producing the Post-Enrollment Transfer Receptive Culture

From the perspectives of the Latina/o/x community college transfer students most of the students are awarded financial aid in the form of grants and loans. Additionally, several students who had to make up for financial aid that they did not get awarded either worked multiple jobs during their summer and winter breaks and saved the money and used it throughout the academic year, others worked part-time jobs during the academic year, and a few also relied on their family to support them financially when needed. Furthermore, findings show that there is a limited amount of academic and social supportive environments to meet the needs and goals of Latina/o/x transfer students, including the needs of students with dependents.

Furthermore, from the perspective of university personnel we learned that there is a limited amount of scholarships for transfer students. In terms of academic support, we heard from two faculty who are doing their best in providing an academic supportive environment for the Latina/o/x transfer students in their courses. As for academic advisors and from the coordinator of the transfer student programming, we learned that

the academic support they offer community college transfer students may be limited in how effective it can be in providing a supportive academic environment since the tutoring offered is modeled to serve the traditional college going population or it is modeled to refer students to other services on campus. Finally, in terms of a socially supportive environment, the staff in charge of running the transfer student programming at TSU, provided good examples of how TSU is creating a supportive social environment for Latina/o/x transfer students, which is mainly through providing events to reintroduce students to resources on campus and through the Transfer Experience Center. The challenge for both seems to be how to make both more culturally responsive in order to meet the specific needs of Latina/o/x transfer students.

Exploring the Spatial Transfer Receptive Culture.

One of the aspects that is missing from the TRC framework (Jain, et al., 2011) is the social and physical spaces where students may confront the ideological, material, and structural conditions of the university. Therefore the goal here was to understand student's perceptions of the spatial transfer receptive culture for Latina/o/x community college transfer students at TSU. Students were asked to engage in a two-part photo collection activity. The first part asked students to describe what their own definition of receptive and unreceptive campus spaces/environments were. The second part of this activity asked students to provide a total of three photos and answer a few questions that described a space/environment that was receptive, unreceptive, and their favorite/most meaningful space/environment on campus. Findings from the spatial analysis through photo elicitation revealed that receptive spaces/environments were generally represented

by places that were friendly like the gym. Places that were quiet where people could relax or be motivated to do school work, like the lounge area in the Department of Communications Sciences & Disorders, the library, places where students could interact with nature like the turtle pond, or places that were safe and accepting of DACA students, like the international office. Additionally, looking at the spaces/environment from a CRSA framework, photos revealed that for most students race was not directly an issue that impacted them. This was the exception with Yosdi, a DACA student. Given her status along with the current political conditions and the history of anti-immigrant culture at TSU, finding a place where citizenship status was protected was important to her.

Additionally, unreceptive spaces/environments were generally represented by spaces where students did not see their culture represented, like in classrooms. Unreceptive spaces/environments, also were represented by places where perceived differences in social class like a Starbucks, made students feel uncomfortable. Finally, unreceptive spaces/environments were places like the school of business or the engineering education and research center, which made students feel devalued or excluded. From a CRSA framework, in unreceptive spaces/environments race directly or indirectly played a role in student perceptions of these social and physical spaces. This was evident in the classroom that Yosdi described, where the majority of her peers were White students and where the predominant language in which students learned was in English. For Cruz, Christian, and Daniel, race was manifested in more indirect ways such as in perceived class differences or feeling excluded from your own academic department through their monitoring mechanisms.

Finally, student's favorite/most meaningful spaces/environments on campus represented overcoming challenges, personal accomplishments, and representation of people who looked like the students who participated in this project. For one student it was the engineering buildings, places where he felt accepted and valued for who he represented as a Latino community college transfer student and where he was able to thrive academically and socially. Finally, for the last group of students their favorite place was the field, where they could open up, be themselves, interact with other people, and play the game they love. From a CRSA perspective, there were spaces/environments on campus where race was represented in positive ways. For Yosdi, it was walking by the intersection near the water fountain, where she saw people who looked like her represented. For Christian, it was in the engineering buildings where he was able to collaborate with others regardless of race or social background and in the process create positive academic and social environments. Finally, for Cruz and Daniel, it was the field where they crossed any type of perceived boundaries and found others to play soccer, for the love of the game.

Overall this approach to study spatial perceptions was helpful in this study because the photos provided by students gave us insights into understanding the ideological, material, and structural conditions that Latina/o/x transfer students experience and confront in social and physical spaces at an institution like TSU. The findings overall indicate that the university needs to create more culturally responsive spaces where Latina/o/x students see themselves and their culture represented, where Latina/o/x students feel safe and protected, and spaces that nurture building relationships

across race, class, gender, socio-economic status, and immigration status. Finally, findings also reveal the spaces/environments students have created to be able to succeed academically and socially. Photos also reveal how students navigate unreceptive spaces, meaning they show the spaces students may avoid visiting and spending time in. Lastly, photos also reveal spaces/environments students engage in different activities that provide a sense of success, joy, and happiness.

Implications for Higher Education

As stated earlier Latina/o/x students in Texas make up 42% of students who enroll in the community college, only 20% of Latina/o/x students who begin their post-secondary education at a Texas community college, transfer to a four-year college or university after six-years (Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2016). In general students who participated in this study experienced limited direct outreach and limited support during the pre-application and post-admissions transfer process by TSU, that may have delayed, disrupted, or ultimately discouraged them to apply and transfer to TSU. Therefore, the first step in increasing and securing the number of Latina/o/x community college students who transfer from the community college to a four-year institution in Texas is to focus on eliminating all the institutional barriers associated with the transfer process. This includes actively and purposefully, working with students while they are at the community college to ensure that they are taking the correct coursework that would make them transfer eligible. In addition, this will require training all their personnel on culturally responsive ways to serve prospective Latina/o/x community college students, that they may interact with or communicate with during the pre-application or post-

admissions stage of the transfer process. To do this, four-year institutions like Transfer Student University, can start by doing two things. First, four-year institutions must place the transfer of Latina/o/x community college students as a high institutional priority (Jain et al., 2011). This means that enrollment of prospective Latina/o/x transfer students should not be influenced by the number of freshman students who are automatically admitted under the top 10% law, instead the institution should expand their admissions goal by reserving a certain amount of seats for students who traditionally come from the community college. Second, four-year institutions outreach should be culturally responsive and must address the specific needs of Latina/o/x college students. This can be done by expanding what NSS and the TYEP currently does at the community college, they can train former Latina/o/x community college students who successfully transferred to TSU, to go back to to their community colleges and work as peer mentors. This will promote the mission of transfer while instilling in students a sense of pride in their heritage and a sense of belonging in the university (Perez and Ceja, 2009; Jain et al., 2011) by being able to connect and build a positive academic and social relationship with someone who may share their same backgrounds. Furthermore, recruitment and outreach of Latina/o/x students must be a shared effort across the university and not the responsibility of one or a few units on campus. Shared efforts may begin by conducting an overall assessment and evaluation of current transfer programing on campus. This will provide the institution with an idea of what is currently being done for the community college student population and ultimately enhance transfer receptive programs.

Implications for Transfer Policy

The current university admissions policies in the state of Texas may impact the number of Latina/o/x community college that transfer to Transfer Student University. Currently, TSU offers automatic freshman admissions to students who are in the top 7% of their high school graduating class and to community college transfer students who meet the current automatic freshman admissions requirements. These requirements include those who have graduated from a Texas high school in 2008 or later, enroll in a Texas community college after graduating from high school, complete the core curriculum at a Texas community college or at another lower-division institution of higher education in Texas, earn a cumulative GPA of at least a 2.5 on a 4.0 scale, and apply for transfer admissions to a term no later than four years after the academic year in which the student graduated from high school (See Footnote²⁶). The current transfer policy works for community college students leaves out community college students who were not in the top 10% of their graduating class and potential transfer students who moved to Texas after high school.

Additionally, there are two programs that expand the admissions options for first time incoming freshman students at TSU. The Freshmen Transfer Program (FTP) (See Footnote)²⁷ started with the Fall/Summer 2001 admissions. FTP at TSU, expands the admission options available to first-year applicants to TSU by allowing them to begin their post-secondary education at another TSU system university. Once the student

²⁶ For the sake of anonymity of the institution, the study retracts this source. For a copy of this and others sources retracted in this study please contact the author.

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fulfills the FTP requirements as a freshman, he or she can transfer to TSU to complete their undergraduate degree (See Footnote)²⁸.

Also, in 2014, TSU partnered with Transfer Community College (pseudonym) and launched a co-enrollment program for incoming first-year students. Freshmen Transfer Program through Co-Enrollment (FTPCE) was developed for students who are Texas residents and are eligible for automatic admission under the state's top 10 percent law, but who do not qualify under the new automatic admission policy for TSU (See Footnote)²⁹. Students who participate in FTPCE have two years to complete the core curriculum and maintain a 2.5 cumulative grade point average in order to continue with their bachelor's degree at TSU. Some of the benefits for students are that they have access to TSU advisors and resources but are not required to apply to transfer to TSU. This means that TSU is intentionally prioritizing first time incoming freshmen students who are within the top 10% of their graduating class.

Findings from this study showed that only one student who participated in this study was admitted under the “automatic transfer admission” policy. This means that either students who qualify to transfer under this policy are not applying to transfer to TSU or that TSU is not actively promoting this when they are outreaching to prospective students. In order for TSU, to increase the number of Latina/o/x community college students who transfer to TSU in the state of Texas, it must expand their partnerships with

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other community college districts in the state of Texas. That means expanding their current Freshmen Transfer Program through Co-Enrollment (FTPCE) program to include Latina/o/x community college students who have the potential to achieve at a high academic level and who would benefit from a program like this. Also, they must renew their partnerships with community colleges in the state of Texas. with strong Latina/o/x student representation.

Implications for Transfer Practice

Current transfer practices at TSU, suggest that there is a lack of culturally responsive transfer student programming that can support the specific needs and goals of Latina/o/x community college students in Texas. For example, there exists a limited amount of direct outreach on the community college campuses where students who participated in this study transferred from. This lead to students having limited information regarding the transfer application, transfer requirements including major specific requirements, financial aid, housing, and academic/social support for transfer students. Additionally, current outreach from TSU campus representatives, is exclusively conducted at the local community college (TCC), where a strong partnership already exists. In order to improve the quality of outreach provided to future Latina/o/x community college transfer students at TSU, the institution should increase their direct outreach to community colleges outside the local community college district they currently serve to include areas and institutions with high Latinx student enrollements. Also, the direct outreach should be culturally responsive, in that in meets the specific needs of the students whether they are first-generation, non-traditional in age, an

international student, a DACA student, or a student with dependents. In terms of the current financial aid specifically for community college transfer students, the funds are limited in two ways. First, there are only two scholarships specifically for transfer students, the “Terry Transfer Scholarship” and the “Floyd Agnew Scholarship.” Second, the “Terry Transfer Scholarship” is not administered through the financial aid office at TSU, therefore the school does not have any influence on who receives the aid. Finally, the “Floyd Agnew Scholarship” awards 2-3 scholarships a year, limiting the number of students it will support. To better support Latina/o/x community college transfer students, TSU should set money aside to create scholarships specifically for Latina/o/x students and other underserved populations.

Additionally, housing for community college transfer students is not available. This left all of the non-local students struggling to find housing last minute and in some cases even sacrificing being away from their families. For example, Carina and Lucia, two students with dependents, had to leave their family members, including their children and dependent siblings, back home because they could not bring them to live with them. To prevent community college transfer students from struggling last minute to secure housing, TSU should provide guaranteed housing for transfer students at least during their first year at the university. Also, TSU should reserve some units in family housing for transfer students who are parents, are married, in domestic partnerships, or are legal guardians of their siblings. Academic supportive environments for Latina/o/x students exist in the classroom mainly due to the disposition of the professors like Juan and Lupita, who are willing to do what it takes for their students to succeed. Outside of the

classroom some students are offered to be part of the Transfer Student Learning Communities (TSLC) or access the different tutoring services offered to all TSU students. This presents a limited supportive environment from a TRC frame since the TSLC serve mainly as a space to connect students with services on campus and the tutoring services offered on campus are not modeled to serve the diverse and sometimes specific academic needs of community college transfer students. TSU must work towards offering a supportive academic environment that includes academic counseling, peer mentoring and reciprocal learning techniques (Jain et al., 2011) in order to motivate and reassure students that they can achieve at a high academic level.

In terms of the social support provided to Latina/o/x transfer students TSU does a good job of hosting what they call “extended orientation” events on campus to re-introduced all the services available to their students. Additionally, TSU has a Transfer Experience Center that is staffed by students who work for the Transfer Year Experience Program, to support the needs of transfer students. However, based on the findings from this study Latina/o/x students may not be aware that the TEC even exists and there were examples of how TSU was not able to support the specific needs of some of the students even when they reached out for assistance. For example, Carina who was a parent and a student, was not able to find housing or daycare for her son. As a result, her son and her husband lived apart from her while she was going to school. Also, Lucia who was the legal guardian for her sister, couldn’t find the support she needed in order to be able to bring her sister to live with her. Instead she left TSU, enrolled back at her local community college, and then transferred to her local university. Although she was agentic

and succeeded in re-enrolling in higher education, she had to withdraw from TSU a tier-one university. In order to make TSU a more receptive campus for Latina/o/x transfer students, TSU needs to learn more about their students who are applying and who are enrolling in their institution. Students should not have to be put in a situation where they live away from their children or where they leave the institution because they can't bring their sibling to live with them, even as their legal guardians. If TSU currently has daycare and housing for graduate students with dependents they must expand these services to transfer students who would benefit from these services. Additionally, these services should be promoted through direct and indirect outreach done by the university, during campus visits, on their website, and any printed literature so that as many students as need the services can access them.

Contributions to Theory

In the field of cultural studies, this study has the potential to expand the theoretical construct of “cultural production” initially developed by Levinson, Holland and Foley (1996). In this study, “*cultural production*” highlighted how Latina/o/x community college transfer students applied their community cultural wealth, mainly their aspirational, familial, navigational, and social capitals (Yosso, 2005) to produce the transfer receptive culture (Jain et al., 2011) not set in place by the institution they were transferring to. They did this mainly in how they went against the lack of information/misinformation, the lack of academic/social resources, and the lack of an overall culturally responsive institutional/campus environment, to meet their specific needs and goals, through the transfer process and beyond.

In terms of the transfer receptive culture theory, this study has the potential to advance the framework in two ways. First, by showing how Latina/o/x community college transfer student's agency operates under structural constraints, during the transfer process from the community college to the four-year institution. Second, by showing how Latina/o/x community college transfer students experience and make sense of the transfer receptive culture at a PWI through images of campus spaces/environments they have identified as being receptive, unreceptive, and their favorite/most meaningful on campus.

Contributions to Methodology

Using photographic elicitation (Harper, 2002) for this study is an important contribution to the methodology in two ways. First, photo elicitation allowed the participants to contribute to the data collection process by encouraging them to provide photos describing different spaces/environments on campus, from their point of view. This is important seeing that traditional research methodologies generally do not allow participants to be actively involved in the data collection process. Second, photos taken by participants provided insights into their social and physical environments, specifically spaces/environments on campus where they felt were receptive and unreceptive, and their favorite/most meaningful place on campus. These are aspects of the transfer receptive culture (Jain et al., 2011) that cannot be captured through interviews. Thus this method adds to the TRC framework significantly by providing photos of the ideological, material, and structural conditions that Latina/o/x community college transfer students confront in social and physical spaces at TSU.

Directions for Future Research

The present case study offered valuable insights into how Latina/o/x community college transfer students at a PWI in Texas, used their community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005) to navigate and engage in the “cultural production” (Levinson and Holland, 1996) of the transfer receptive culture (Jain et al., 2011) By conducting semi-structured interviews with ten Latina/o community college transfer students and eight university personnel. Additionally, I also collected twenty photos describing the social and physical spaces where students spend time on campus, through photo elicitation. Future studies may work with a larger group of Latina/o/x transfer students and include a wider selection of institutions, including other PWI’s in Texas, Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSI’s), HBCUs, private colleges and universities. Additionally, future investigations should look into other ethnic/racial and non-traditional (e.g., 25-years and older, students with dependents, veterans, and re-entry students) community college transfer students, including a focus on students, faculty, staff, administrators, and institutional types (e.g., non-MSIs vs. MSIs). This is important for two reasons, first because traditionally minority students have historically used and continue to use the community college as a pathway into higher education. Therefore, is important to understand what MSI’s and non-MSI’s are actively doing to ensure that more students of color become transfer eligible, apply, transfer, and graduate from a four-year institution. Finally, having the voices of transfer students and of those who work with or on behalf of transfer students, is the best way to fully understand the issue at hand and more importantly find solutions that will benefit the student.

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